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ITORIAL

ONNIE AND CLYDE-ISM

From the ragged fringes of extremism, weathered underground, came a murderous outburst, and now the Brinks heist in Nyack, New York, has mobilized the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is likely that these reprehensible killings signal an end rather than a beginning of a period of nihilistic violence, but that will depend upon what the authorities do and how much the media sensationalizes terrorism.

By transforming what may be the remnants of the lost brigades of the 1960s into a far-flung "terrorist network," the authorities could raise the "revolutionary" consciousness of the romantically disaffected. Indeed, heavy-handed repression could provoke further radical adventurism.

The head of the F.B.I. office in New York City called the case a "racketeering investigation" because "there is association and there is communication" among the "radical groups." The New York G-man darkly doubted that "the old left . . . ever went away" (ignoring the fact that the old left was notable for never doing anything but talking) and said that underground groups are "bent on destroying American society as we know it." But who and what and where are these plotters? "You look into possible foreign entanglements," confided a Bureau spokesman in Washington, D.C.

Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were always looking for connections between the anti-Vietnam War movement and foreign governments in order to legitimize a crackdown. Now that Reagan & Co. want to put the Central Intelligence Agency back in the business of domestic "intelligence," the shoot-'em-up underground has handed the repressionists a hunting license. Thanks to the Weather Underground's Bonnies and Clydes, we may see a new Red scare that will advance no one's "revolution."

SPECIAL REPORT: REAGAN RATED

★ ★ ★

Mark Green

Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward

Patricia Derian

Ralph Nader

James Ridgeway

★

'RABBIT IS RICH'

Gene Lyons

ARE YOU BETTER OFF NOW?

RATING REAGAN: TREND LINES, FAULT LINES

The first anniversary of Ronald Reagan's election is upon us. In his television debate with Jimmy Carter more than a year ago, Reagan asked the American people, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" Now it is time to begin rating Reagan by measuring his promises against the dangers of his policies. Mark Green, a frequent contributor, has edited the special section that follows.

—The Editors

MARK GREEN

Why does Ronald Reagan confuse us so? For years he was routinely underestimated by the press and his opponents; now he is just as regularly overestimated. He's "King of the Hill." The "chairman of the board." A Republican F.D.R.

To be sure, a year after his election, President Reagan appears to be doing as well as his devotees had hoped and better than his critics had expected—and for reasons not terribly mysterious. Compared with Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan is stable, decisive, charming and damn nice.

The press has a way of magnifying both the victories and the defeats of a President—of apotheosizing the momentary. And it has a habit of focusing more on who's up and who's down than on the content and impact of the prevailing side's programs. But as the President is lionized for his winsome personality and

(Continued on Page 462)

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LETTERS.

SCOTT PAPER AND THE BOYCOTT

Philadelphia

Scott Paper Company strongly objects to the reference to Scott in the article "How the U.S. and Business Cooperated," [Mark Green and Steven Solow, *The Nation*, Oct. 17]. In that article, the authors indicated that Scott "took part in the Arab boycott of Israel" and "lied about [its] participation." Both statements are totally untrue.

Scott Paper Company never took part in the Arab boycott of Israel, and indeed, during the years referred to in the article, Scott sold products both to Israel and to the Arab nations. The company has long had a policy that states its strong opposition to restrictive trade practices and boycotts against countries friendly to the United States, and that prohibits it from taking any actions that could be construed as being in any way supportive of such restrictive trade practices.

From 1968 to 1975, Scott, like hundreds of U.S. exporters, made routine factual statements on export documents when required in connection with sales to Arab customers, which were insignificant in volume. These statements, in general, simply indicated that the goods were not of Israeli origin and that the vessel on which they were being carried did not call on Israeli ports. These statements of fact were in no way supportive of the boycott and therefore were not reportable to the government. In an effort to assist the government, however, Scott decided to report and did report all such requests from Arab customers to the Commerce Department on a regular basis. Scott's voluntary effort to provide such information to the U.S. government cannot be construed in any way as compliance with any aspect of the boycott. . . . In a January 15, 1976, letter to the Commerce Department Scott set forth its opposition to the Arab boycott and the basis on which it was providing information to the government. In part, that letter stated:

> Although reports of such requests [for information by Arab customers] have been submitted regularly by Scott since 1968, so far as can be determined Scott has never received any indication from the government that its actions were in any way questionable under U.S. policy.
>
> In our report to you of last October 10 for the third quarter of 1975, we concluded with the following statement:
>
> > We have or will comply with the request based on our belief that furnishing the type of information noted in this report is not intended to nor does it have the effect of contravening U.S. boycott policy which we support.
>
> . . . In furtherance of Scott's desire to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the government's policy and to avoid any action that might be misconstrued as boycott-supportive, we are advising importers in the Middle East that we will no longer make even routine factual declarations which could conceivably be interpreted as furthering a restrictive trade practice against a country friendly to the United States.

We request that *The Nation* set the record straight in your next issue by publishing this letter.

Philip J. Webster
Vice President, Public Affairs
Scott Paper Company

GREEN AND SOLOW REPLY

New York City

Despite his indignation, Philip Webster confirms exactly what we wrote—that Arab states required American companies trading with them to agree to various requests related to the boycott of Israel. Webster is in the odd position of arguing that although his company told the Commerce Department for seven years that it was complying with Arab boycott requests, it was really *not* complying with Arab boycott requests. Perhaps George Orwell would understand.

Webster makes two claims that deserve comment. First, he says that Scott provided information about boycott requests "voluntarily" to the department. The information was provided voluntarily in the same way taxes are paid voluntarily—since 1965 the Export Administration Act has compelled companies to disclose this information. Second, he has written that "Scott has never received any indication from the government that its actions were in any way questionable under U.S. policy." Yet at the top of the form filed by Scott for more than seven years is the following language above the signature of the Secretary of Commerce: "All U.S. exporters of articles, materials, supplies or information are encouraged and requested to refuse to take, but are not legally prohibited from taking, any action, *including the furnishing of information* or the signing of agreements which has the effect of furthering or supporting [such] restrictive trade practices or boycotts." (Emphasis added.)

Mark Green and Steven Solow

REMEMBERING THE L.I.D.

Yonkers, N.Y.

I often wonder why *The Nation* and other publications choose to review nonbooks, but Kirkpatrick Sale's review ["A Selective History," *The Nation*, Sept. 26] of *The League for Industrial Democracy, A Documentary History* ($225, no less) jogged my memory. It is news to me that the league still exists. But what Sale forgot to mention is that the name of the organization Jack London founded was the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. Norman Thomas, who I thought was allergic to the word "socialist," changed the name. But in 1916, when a classmate and I organized, with the consent of Dean Richardson, a staunch I-shall-not-be-moved Republican, a chapter at the Brooklyn Law School, it was still the Intercollegiate Socialist Society.

The first speaker we invited was Harry W. Laidler, an alumnus of the Brooklyn Law School. He was cordially greeted by the dean. Then I brought Bird S. Coler, who was borough president (or ex-borough president) of Manhattan or Brooklyn. A socialist assemblyman was next, and one Dobson, editor of *The Brooklyn Standard Union* and a perennial debater with socialists, was the fourth. And then! Louis B. Boudin was an elected delegate to the Kings County Central Committee of the Socialist Party; I was its youngest elected delegate. Boudin was the author of *Government by Judiciary*, a ponderous tome. I prevailed upon him to be our fifth lecturer. We had our fliers printed (at a union shop, natch) and then distributed them and put one on the bulletin board. The dean stormed: "Did you come here to study law or to propagate socialism?" When the storm abated we persuaded the dean to allow Boudin to speak if he changed his subject. Boudin angrily rejected the suggestion, telling me he had addressed student groups on this subject at Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth and elsewhere and was not about to change it for a sixth-rate law school. That was the end of our chapter.

My colleague went on to become a Tammany Hall district leader in Manhattan. I was drafted and went overseas, but not before a short period of street-corner speaking against the draft and our entry into World War I, and street-corner selling of the August 1917 issue of *The Masses*, barred from the mails. I did not return until August 1919, when I found the Socialist Party and my world in sad disarray. Rose Pastor Stokes, Irwin St. John Tucker, Victor L. Berger and other members of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party had been convicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to fifteen years in jail (they never served but I don't know the disposition of this case) for carrying out the principles of the manifesto against the war and the draft issued by the N.E.C. of the S.P. (There were no Communists at that time, but Rose Pastor Stokes became a very active Communist.)

So the League for Industrial Democracy still exists and is in the same league with Podhoretz, Kristol, Epstein, Moynihan, Kirkpatrick, et al. But $225? Who's loony now?

Louis Weil

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Hanging Together

For more than a year, Congress has been threatening to pass a "names of agents" law that, for the first time in American history, would prevent private citizens from publishing or otherwise disclosing certain information from unclassified sources [see editorial, "Crying Wolf," *The Nation*, August 30-September 6, 1980]. Now that the threat is about to become reality, the sole remaining question appears to be whether citizens should be punished only when they have "the intent to impair or impede the foreign intelligence activities of the United States," or whether mere "reason to believe" their activities would impair or impede is sufficient.

The debate over this language is significant—not only because it could determine the reach of legislation that those who are close to the process tell us is sure to pass but because it has raised the perennial questions of means and ends, of expediency and principle, that have so bitterly divided civil libertarians in the past and now threaten to do so again.

The American Civil Liberties Union has opposed any names of agents bill as inherently unconstitutional. Nevertheless, when it became probable that Congress would pass some version of it, the A.C.L.U., without abandoning its constitutional objections, worked to narrow the language to require proof of criminal intent. Morton Halperin and Jerry

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Berman, representing the A.C.L.U., have argued that while both versions violate the First Amendment, the "intent" language would have a less chilling effect on free speech.

After intensive lobbying by the A.C.L.U., including a controversial secret meeting with representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency, the House Intelligence Committee accepted the narrower "intent" language on July 22. When the bill (H.R. 4) hit the House floor on September 23, however, the sparks began to fly—from left and right. Representative John Ashbrook, the conservative Ohio Republican, introduced an amendment, favored by the Administration, that substituted the "reason to believe" test. "The language that I object to is American Civil Liberties Union language," Ashbrook said. "I see no reason whatsoever that the members of this body should accommodate what we think is right to the requests, the demands or whatever we want to call them of the American Civil Liberties Union. We should not let Jerry Berman and Morton Halperin have that kind of influence on this body." The House agreed, and the Ashbrook amendment passed overwhelmingly, as did the bill.

Some on the left were equally outraged by the tactics of the A.C.L.U. "It is wrong—politically, morally and strategically—for the American Civil Liberties Union to choose between two concededly unconstitutional versions of the bill and to seek actively the adoption of the so-called lesser of two evils," Bill Schaap, editor of *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, charged in a recent debate with Halperin in New York City. "The A.C.L.U. . . . lost no time in distancing itself—as it has so often in the past—from the least popular victims of the repression they are charged and expected to resist," Schaap said.

Schaap also criticized the A.C.L.U. for meeting with the C.I.A. His words called to mind the controversy that surrounded a meeting in 1939 of Morris Ernst, counsel for the A.C.L.U., and Martin Dies, chairman of the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities. (After that visit, and some say because of it, the A.C.L.U. expelled Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a Communist Party member, from its board, thus setting a sad precedent for much that was to follow in the postwar attack on civil liberties.)

The issue now, however, is not—or should not be—the performance of the A.C.L.U., which is no longer the organization it was during the 1950s (it has even restored Flynn to its board posthumously), and has been in the forefront of the fight to protect the First Amendment. Rather, three important questions must be carefully addressed. First, does working for the lesser evil inevitably mean accepting and legitimizing the assumptions one ought to be challenging? Second, there is a whole constellation of questions having to do with identifying the enemy and deciding how best to resist, on a case by case basis, the new wave of attacks on the First Amendment. Third, and perhaps most crucial at this juncture, how can we debate honest differences over tactics without repeating the fragmentation among the victims that occurred during the domestic cold war?

If it is true that the danger of the lesser-evil approach is that it may give legitimacy to bad measures, it is also true that making a bad law less bad is a worthy undertaking. Civil libertarians have long debated such issues of tactics and strategy, and no doubt will continue to do so [see *The Nation*: editorial, "Grandson of S. 1," November 3, 1979; symposium, "Chartering the F.B.I.," October 6, 1979, and symposium, "The Red Squad Settlements Controversy," July 11-18], and we will provide a forum for that debate in the weeks and months ahead.

But an absolute precondition for such a debate is that we keep in sight the source and the nature of the danger. The Senate is about to take up the names of agents bill (S. 391), the Administration is trying to gut the Freedom of Information Act, and there is a draft of a new executive order floating about that would unleash the C.I.A. on domestic dissent. In this climate, there is a compelling need to recognize that the pre-eminent threat to civil liberties today

CONSUMER DEFECTION

James C. Miller 3d, the new chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, said at his inaugural press conference that the government should get out of the consumer-protection business. "Consumers are not as gullible as many regulators think they are," he explained, and then loyally volunteered his agency for an additional 18 percent cut in its appropriations.

What really impressed us about the new chairman, however, was—well, it was not just his quickness with the apt apothegm. "There is no free lunch" was one of many bon mots with which he enlivened the occasion. Wish we'd said that when we wrote our editorial on cutbacks in the school-lunch program.

No, the high point of the chairman's homily was his defense of "imperfect products." They should be available to all, he said, because consumers have "different preferences for defect avoidance. Those who have a low aversion to risk—relative to money—will be most likely to purchase cheap, unreliable products." We dispatched our investigators to discover if Miller owned stock in any companies that specialize in unreliable products, but our heart wasn't really in it. Because Miller is right. Just as surely as ketchup is a vegetable, people who can't afford good-quality merchandise should be able to buy cheap, defective products instead. Think of it—a TV set for low-risk-aversionists. We can imagine the commercial:

> Lemon TV sets—the colors are mushy, and if the tube doesn't blow up in your face, the extra radiation will get you. But for only $50 a set, it would cost you more to commit suicide.

The only problem is that Miller believes advertisers should not be required to substantiate their claims. If he has his way, the consumer will have no guarantee that he is getting an unreliable product. Why, some shady businessman might sell him something that really works.

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comes not from colleagues with the wrong tactics but from an Administration and a Congress that are poised to do fundamental damage to the Bill of Rights. Perhaps now is the time for the A.C.L.U. and other organizations in the business of defending civil liberties to hold a general meeting with potential defendants and thrash out the tactical issues that threaten to divide us.

La Vie en Rose

Valence, France

Last week, in a storm of revolutionary rhetoric, the much-heralded "victory congress" of newly elected President François Mitterrand's Socialist Party opened in this small Rhone Valley town, the capital of France's lavender industry. With Mitterrand's program for the nationalization of key industries and financial institutions being attacked by the largely conservative French press and by the right-wing political opposition (which still controls the Senate), the Socialists were in a combative mood. This mood was intensified just days before the opening of the congress by *l'affaire Paribas*, in which the head of one of France's leading private banking companies resigned his post and transferred much of his bank's investment capital to Swiss banks as a protest against the forthcoming nationalization of the banking industry.

"It's either the banks or us," shouted the grand old man of the party, Gaston Deferre, who was for years the socialist mayor of Marseilles and is now Mitterrand's Minister of the Interior. His table-thumping speech brought the delegates to their feet in wild applause. The party's number-three man, National Secretary Paul Quiles, went further in an address on the first day of the congress. "It would be naïve to leave in place those who are determined to sabotage the political will of the French people," he said. "I have in mind certain bureaucrats, prefects, directors of companies and high functionaries. It is not enough to say, like Robespierre at the convention, that heads must roll. We must also say whose heads, and do it quickly."

Although one of the first acts of Mitterrand's government was to abolish the death penalty and the use of the guillotine, this unfortunate locution played into the hands of the conservative supporters of former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who promptly labeled the meeting in Valence "the congress of ayatollahs."

But by the end of the congress's second day, it was clear that this fusillade of militant leftist speechmaking was intended primarily for consumption by the party's rank and file, who tend to be more radical than their leaders. A parade of government ministers took the podium to remind the delegates that while the Socialists have absolute control over the Elysée Palace and the Chamber of Deputies, Mitterrand's victory was the product of a coalition that included many nonleftist voters. (The day that the congress opened, the French Senate rejected the government's proposal to nationalize several steel plants in southern France.) Mitterrand himself, who was attending the North-South conference in Cancún, Mexico, sent a mild message to the delegates counseling patience. Even Jean-Pierre Chevenement, the leader of C.E.R.E.S., the party's radical left wing, who now holds an important post as Minister of State in charge of research and technology, argued that "militants do not have the right to be malcontents." He urged caution on his followers, saying that to replace executives in the private sector would wreak havoc in an economy already beset by a 15 percent inflation rate and high unemployment.

In fact, there was very little substantive debate at the congress, which was artfully stage-managed by the party's popular First Secretary, Leonel Jospin, a former professor and government technocrat who was handpicked by Mitterrand to keep the troops in line. The quietly ambitious Jospin, who was cheered every time he walked through the meeting hall, wrapped up the congress with a crafty one-hour speech that soothed the left by attacking the lords of capitalism while arguing forcefully for the government's program of gradual and piecemeal change (even if the Socialists' blueprint for nationalization is enacted, 80 percent of the French economy will remain in private hands).

Though there was a contingent of more than 500 observers from foreign countries—including Cambodia's exiled Prince Norodom Sihanouk, representatives from Andreas Papandreou's newly elected Socialist government in Greece who were greeted with the singing of the "Internationale," representatives from the Afghan rebels, who were loudly cheered, and, seated next to the Chinese delegation, a Soviet delegation headed by Boris Ponomarev, a member of the Politburo—the congress paid relatively little attention to foreign affairs. In fact, the tone of such few remarks as there were was predominantly anti-Communist and anti-Soviet. Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, along with Jospin, Chevenement and other speakers ranging the ideological spectrum from right to left, attacked "neutralism" and "pacifism." C.E.R.E.S. strongly supports Mitterrand's program for an expanded French nuclear capability, both in energy and in weaponry (including France's own version of the neutron bomb). Only the leader of the party's moderates, Michel Rocard (whose father helped design the first French atomic bomb), opposes nuclearization, but he was silent on this question. He is Minister for Planning in Mitterrand's government, and the faction in the party he leads had its representation on the national executive board reduced from 21 percent to 15 percent.

In a private dinner conversation, a leading Socialist minister admitted that France's foreign-policy strategy calls for the creation of a new Franco-American bloc. Dismissing the European peace movement (which held demonstrations attended by at least 500,000 people the weekend of the congress) as either Communist-inspired or motivated primarily by trade ties to the Eastern bloc (as in the case of West Germany's Willy Brandt), this minister insisted that the only way France can play an important role in world affairs is to build up its military power and, at a time of increasing American isolation in the world, avoid any direct confrontation with the Reagan Administration. This means, for example, that any aid to antitotalitarian revolutionaries

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in Latin America will probably be confined to press releases.

The symbol of the Socialist Party is the rose, and the color of their rose is pink, not red. Preoccupied with social reconstruction at home, making haste slowly as they find themselves in power for the first time in twenty-three years, France's Socialists—a party of teachers, petit-bourgeois intellectuals and technicians, with no solid working-class base—are unlikely revolutionaries indeed. Their president, who is possessed of a capacious ego, is clearly unwilling to chart a pioneering course in foreign policy. One came away from the first congress of Socialists-in-power with the feeling that François Mitterrand, if his first months in office are any indication, may well become a kind of social democratic Lyndon Johnson without a Vietnam. DOUG IRELAND

Doug Ireland, former senior editor and columnist for The Soho News *and former Washington columnist for* New York *magazine, contributes to the Parisian monthly* Actuel.

SPECIAL REPORT.

Rating Reagan

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

domestic legislative wins, several less publicized trends and fault lines are discernible.

In this symposium, seven writers attempt to trace some of these trends and faults. In doing so, they remind us that Reagan was elected largely because the voters thought he would do a better job than Carter; he was not given an ideological mandate for reactionary restructuring. For example, exit polls taken last November 4 found that while only 10 percent of those who had voted for Reagan said they supported him because he was "a conservative," nearly 40 percent simply cited that it was "time for a change."

To do Reagan's injustices justice would, of course, require several book-length analyses. This present collection represents an early contribution to what will no doubt be a growing body of opposition literature. It is not a comprehensive assessment. The contributors do not address Reagan's policies on arms control, civil rights and other issues that *The Nation* has commented on frequently during the past year. Rather, their field of vision is narrowed to five areas—supply-side economics, the welfare state, human rights, governmental secrecy and the environment—in which the Administration is carrying out a number of bold initiatives.

Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer discuss why they think Reaganomics will implode from its own erroneous assumptions. Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward document the extent and the consequences of the Administration's attack on programs that help the poor. Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the Carter State Department, criticizes the Administration's anti-human-rights policies. Ralph Nader, who as a young, unknown lawyer in Washington, D.C., in the early 1960s pored over government documents, complains that President Reagan's policies on access to information are creating a large moat between the government and the public. And James Ridgeway looks at the Reagan Administration's record on the environment and finds it radically out of step with prior administrations, Democratic and Republican, and with public opinion.

The connecting theme of these pieces is that Reaganism will fail, and perhaps Reagan as well. That is, the doctrinaire conservatism that guides this government will objectively and measurably fail as public policy, and the public will eventually associate that failure with a President who now enjoys substantial personal popularity. Let me suggest two political fault lines that, with enough sustained pressure, might grow into gaping fissures.

First, on a long list of important issues—abortion, nuclear energy, health and safety regulation, civil rights, social security, environmental protection, national health insurance—Ronald Reagan is a doctrinaire conservative, out of step with moderate America. Over four years, this disharmony can only lead to tension and unpopularity. Already, for example, a July Harris poll found that by 57 percent to 34 percent, most of the public thought that Reagan's economic policies would be "unfair to the poor and cause hardship on them."

Second, the blatantly pro-business bias of this Administration—and its ostentatious displays of affluence as poverty programs are cut back—is increasingly offensive to the large number of Americans who are concerned about overweening corporate power and privilege. There is no doubt that Reagan sincerely believes that getting government off the back of business will make the United States more prosperous. There is also no doubt that the business elite that has helped him succeed in politics sees him as their champion. They know that he owes them a lot. Without the visibility he enjoyed as the spokesman for General Electric in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and without the financial backing of his "kitchen cabinet" of millionaire businessmen, he never would have been elected governor of California or President. Verne Orr, Governor Reagan's Director of Finance and President Reagan's Secretary of the Air Force, once described the role of these corporate supporters: "It is natural that the type of special-interest group that puts you there [in office] is the one that you're going to listen to more closely. In our case it was the conservative groups, the business groups, that put this administration in. They are our constituency."

Mark Green is the president of the Democracy Project, a nonprofit "action institute," and author of the forthcoming Winning Back America: Alternatives to Reaganism *(Bantam).*

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Fourteen years later, banker and longtime Reagan friend Charles Z. Wick said, "We won the election. We don't intend to lose the government." Alfred Bloomingdale, department store magnate and Reagan intimate, added, "We're surrounding Ronnie with the best people—the ones we'd hire for our own businesses."

Wick can stop worrying about "losing the government." Almost all of the people the President has named to business-sensitive posts either previously represented the regulated industry or are philosophically opposed to the regulatory mission entrusted to them, or both. A pro-development cattleman runs the Bureau of Land Management; a former Exxon lawyer is the general counsel of the Environmental Protection Agency; an Occupational Safety and Health Act violator now runs the agency that enforces this law. Allowing business to police itself makes no sense—unless one wants to repeal legislation without bothering to go back to the legislature.

If Reagan's appointments have pleased his business constituency, the same is true of his policies.

§ The Administration has tried to hasten the decontrol of oil and permit more oil and gas exploration on more Federal land. It also reduced the Department of Energy's enforcement unit by 67 percent.

§ The Administration abandoned the automatic seat belt and airbag requirement for new cars despite overwhelming evidence that many lives would be saved. G.M., Ford and Chrysler lauded the decisions.

§ The new chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, James Miller 3d, said his agency should stop protecting consumers against false advertising and defective products [see box on page 460].

§ In 1980, after more than two years of deliberations, OSHA enacted its landmark Access Rule, which allows workers and their union representatives to inspect company medical records. Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan has recently announced that the department plans to review the standard with an eye toward rewriting it.

§ American companies that sell infant formula abroad complained to the White House about a proposed voluntary code against deceptive marketing practices. Companies like Nestlé, Bristol-Myers, Abbott Labs and American Home Products, along with the Grocery Manufacturers of America, told Reagan aides that their infant formula sales totaled $2 billion annually and that the market was growing. The Reagan White House then overruled the Reagan State Department to cast the only vote in the World Health Organization against the code.

§ William Baxter, head of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, announced that "vertical" mergers between suppliers and dealers and acquisitions by large conglomerates did not trouble him, which helps explain the recent paroxysm of mergers. Many antitrust division lawyers are demoralized by what they regard as Baxter's "pro-trust" policy.

§ The Administration spearheaded a drive that led to $142 billion in tax cuts for corporations over the next five years.

The President periodically demonstrates that he understands the peril of being too closely identified with the big-business community, which is as unpopular in America as big government. "The new Republican Party I envision," he told biographer Frank Van Der Linden, "will not, and cannot, be limited to the country-club-Big-Business image that it is burdened with. . . . It is going to have to make room for the men and women in the factories." Yet when faced with a decision, he almost invariably comes down on the side of corporate interests.

The point is not that the corporate position on an issue is always or even usually wrong, but rather that it is not *always* right, as Reagan's decisions in office would imply. Nor do his speeches show any openness to opposing views. He has rarely expressed sympathy for the victims of business discrimination, pollution, oligopoly, payoffs, corruption or fraud. In his world there is only government bungling; flammable Pintos, exploding Firestone 500s and cancer-breeding toxic-waste dumps simply do not exist.

The costs to the American people of the President's policies are becoming evident. They will be even more visible in his second year in office. And *Fortune* magazine recently reported that 51 percent of Americans making more than $25,000 a year believe that "big business is becoming a threat to the American way of life." This growing skepticism could produce a backlash against an Administration that is an apologist for big business. Out of this discontent will emerge a new generation of "economic democrats" to develop alternatives to the old generation of "economic royalists" now running a government they don't believe in. □

REAGANOMICS

The Supply Side Of the Street

MARTIN CARNOY AND DEREK SHEARER

Supply-side economics is Capital punishment.
—sign at Solidarity Day march

In one year, the Reagan Administration and a compliant Congress have legislated the most significant income redistribution since the 1930s. This time, however, the shift was from the poor and the working class to the rich. The redistribution has been accomplished by transferring resources from the public to the private sector. Thus, Reaganomics does not really mean getting the government off people's backs; it means repealing the hard-won social gains of the past fifty years and using the govern-

Martin Carnoy is a professor of education and economics at Stanford University. Derek Shearer is director of urban studies at Occidental College. They are co-authors of Economic Democracy: The Challenge of the 1980s *(M. E. Sharpe/Pantheon).*

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ment to transfer money to large corporations, high-income earners and military contractors.

Heading the Reagan agenda is a plan to stimulate economic growth by increasing business and investor profits. The driving rationale of Reaganomics is the belief that only increased gains can revive the sagging economy. Many Americans seem prepared, at least for now, to sacrifice wage and benefit increases as their contribution to the President's program for economic salvation. The immediate reward for their faith in him is the tax cut passed by Congress, and their long-term hope is that the annual increases in real purchasing power generated by the U.S. economy between 1947 and 1973 will be restored.

But what is one group's hope is another's fear. Women, minorities and poor people have a different view of Reaganomics.

Military spending is being increased to "restore" American power abroad and to create jobs at home. The Administration claims that the planned elimination of 300,000 Federal jobs will be offset by 1984 through an increase in private-sector employment in the defense industry. Yet the people who stand to lose their jobs are not the ones who will be hired by industry. Government employment primarily benefits professional women (both white and black) and professional minority men (about 50 percent of these two groups worked at all levels of government in the 1970s). Indeed, since 1950, increased public spending has been the single most important impetus behind the greater economic mobility of women and minority men. Defense contractors will hire some women and minorities, but few of them at the professional level. Large corporations have a dismal record on this score. They are dominated at the highest echelons by white males, and there is no reason to believe that, in the current political atmosphere, this will change. Not only will the budget cuts directly affect poor women, blacks and Hispanics but they will slow or halt their long-term economic advancement. Instead, white male skilled workers, engineers and executives will benefit, especially those working for large corporations in the Sun Belt.

If the trade-off of fewer social benefits for more corporate profits is to be made palatable to the majority of Americans, they must gain increased purchasing power. If this does not happen, Reagan's program will be politically bankrupt, and the question he asked in the 1980 Presidential debates—"Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"—will return to haunt him in 1984.

American workers' wages have declined by 12 percent between 1978 and 1980 and by 18 percent since 1973. The average wage earner receives about the same real weekly take-home pay as he or she did in 1965. In the first eight months of this year, nonfarm real wages have declined even more. Under the Administration's tax package, a family of four earning $20,000 a year will pay $300 less Federal tax in 1982 than they did in 1981, assuming that inflation does not push them into a higher tax bracket. But that same family will likely have lost $1,200 in real wages during 1981 because of higher prices. Adding to this family's economic woes are continuing high interest rates, which have undermined the American dream of owning a home and buying a new car every year or so. If the erosion of real income goes on, the short-term outlook for most Americans' standard of living is bleak.

According to supply-side economics, the problem with the economy is that people are not saving or investing enough. Furthermore, productivity is not rising because of government intervention in the economy. Finally, people don't want to work because of high taxes, and inflation is rampant because of too much public spending. The supply-siders claim that redistributing income upward will induce more saving, more investment and greater productivity, all of which will lead to higher growth rates, increased wages, lower inflation and a balanced budget.

Unfortunately for those with dreams of a Republican dynasty based on permanent prosperity, the economic problems are real, but the supply-side assumptions are illusory.

The supply-side hypothesis that lower income taxes will induce people to work harder, produce more and save more is not supported by the facts. For instance, a family making $25,000 a year will be entitled to a $400 tax refund in 1982 and one of about $800 in 1984. But since real wages will continue to decline, this family will probably use their tax savings to maintain their current standard of living.

With unemployment rising (it was 7.5 percent at the end of the third quarter), the fear of being laid off might prod some people into working harder, but that does not result in increased savings. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that economic insecurity reduces productivity by heightening tensions between workers and their bosses. As for high-income groups, there is no certainty that tax breaks will produce harder-working executives or that the idle rich will not use the extra money to buy more luxury goods.

The supply-siders' theory that tax savings will be plowed back into productive, job-creating activities is also not supported by the facts. Many corporations are currently using their anticipated savings from the new rules on depreciation to establish new lines of credit to acquire other companies. Oil companies, which account for more than one-quarter of all private profit, are seeking to monopolize other resources by buying into coal, copper and shale. Consolidation rather than expansion is the dominant corporate strategy. Capital flight continues as manufacturers move abroad. The major source of new capital is public investment in defense industries.

Also implicit in the supply-side recipe for economic abundance is the proposition that corporations will pass on lower costs from lower taxes and improved productivity to the consumer rather than increase their own profits. That prospect is unlikely, however, since any savings from lower taxes will be offset by high interest rates. But even if interest rates should fall, many businesses would like to return to "normal" profits of 16 percent to 18 percent, which they made during the 1960s, as opposed to the 11 percent to 13 percent rate of the 1970s. Re-establishment of high profits is the heart of Reaganomics, and it can only

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mean continued "profit-push" inflation.

The final article of faith in the supply-side creed is that large private corporations are fundamentally efficient. Once government regulations are lifted and taxes lowered, the line goes, they will expand sales, hire more workers and beat their foreign competitors. Reaganomics is based, in large part, on the belief that only the large corporations can revitalize the American economy. Yet costly mistakes by the managers of some of these large corporations—for example, in the tire, automobile and steel industries—have been a major cause of the nation's economic decline. In a widely discussed article published in *Harvard Business Review* last year, professors Robert Hayes and William Abernathy concluded that we are "managing our way to economic decline." And, as Emma Rothschild noted early this year in an article in *The New York Review of Books*, almost three-quarters of all new jobs in the 1970s were created by small businesses, particularly those in the service sector. These are precisely the firms that are hit hardest by high interest rates and tight money, and the firms that benefit least from the new tax laws.

Supply-side measures will create an economy heavily weighted toward military production, turning out goods that cannot be consumed. The well-paid workers in defense industries will create inflationary pressures. As a result, overall real wages must continue to fall so that total demand is held in check. This means squeezing unions and forcing workers to accept lower wage settlements.

President Reagan has said that anyone who has a better plan should step forward. So far, we have had proposals for a return to the gold standard and the halcyon days of the nineteenth century. Investment banker Felix Rohatyn, who is much in vogue in moderate Democratic circles, advocates a form of state capitalism and the creation of a new Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which would channel investment into the declining industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest. Neither of these proposals is particularly appealing to those with democratic, as opposed to Democratic, concerns (Rohatyn's approach stands a good chance of becoming the policy of the next Democratic administration).

Yet there is a workable alternative to Reagan's "cowboy capitalism," to use Mark Green's phrase, and to the state capitalism of Rohatyn. To check inflation, at least in the short run, wage and price controls should be imposed on the largest corporations. Welfare expenditures could be reduced by planning for full employment and a strong defense without massive spending for elephantine carrier fleets, outdated bombers and unnecessary missile systems. Energy costs could be contained by establishing a government-run corporation with complete control over oil imports—a kind of national oil purchasing firm—and by aggressive conservation measures combined with a search for renewable energy sources. Health-care costs could be stabilized through a comprehensive national health insurance plan coupled with tough oversight procedures. Public funds could be channeled into the construction of nonluxury housing, schools, roads, bridges and railroads.

Banks should be directed, through selective credit controls, to invest in those sectors where the ratio of capital investment to job creation is the most favorable. Tax reform

DRAWINGS BY MARSHALL ARISMAN

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should close such loopholes as the deductions on interest taken by speculators in real estate and commodities. Sensible tax reform should actually increase taxes on high incomes. State and local governments, as well as the Federal government, should play a more *direct* role in expanding employment through the purposeful use of public funds, particularly pension funds, to launch new public enterprises.

The failure of Reaganomics will show that far from being the cause of our economic difficulties, government is the last best hope for a democratic revival of the economy—one that will make it both more equitable and more productive. □

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Keeping Labor Lean and Hungry

FRANCES FOX PIVEN AND
RICHARD A. CLOWARD

Almost immediately upon taking office, President Ronald Reagan asked Congress to slash billions of dollars from Federal allocations for social programs. Aid for the unemployed and the poor was the primary target, while spending for defense remained sacrosanct. But the all-out assault on social programs, many of which date back to the New Deal, was launched for reasons that had little to do with defense, tight money or even the New Federalism.

The White House, of course, cited the need to reduce budgetary deficits as the primary reason for the cuts in spending for social programs. Its spokesmen also interpreted the 1980 election as a "mandate" for shrinking the size of the Federal government, especially the part of it that is concerned with social welfare.

But neither of these rationalizations will wash. Even if we accept the need for budget cuts, and even if we buy the unsubstantiated claim that "the electorate" wants less government, we are left with a case for overall reductions in Federal spending--not a license to sock it to the poor.

Actually, the progressive philosophy behind the programs—the idea that government should help the poor and the unemployed—was the real target of the Reagan budget ax. Programs that do not require the applicant to demonstrate need or submit to a means test, like Social Security, Medicare and a variety of veterans' benefits, were left relatively unscathed, while most of the cuts were made in funding for public-service jobs, unemployment insurance, Medicaid, welfare, low-income housing, workers' compensation and food stamps. A reason other than fiscal prudence was the motivating force; conservatives believe that, in an industrial society, aid to the needy reduces business profits by enhancing the bargaining power of the labor force.

The nexus between social programs and the labor market is to be found in the relationship between unemployment and wage levels. A large number of unemployed workers exercises a downward pressure on wages because people who need work will generally accept wages below the going rate. A large pool of unemployed people also acts as a check on the pay and benefit demands of those who have jobs, because the latter, aware of the long line of applicants at the factory gate, are reluctant to jeopardize their own positions. When the unemployed are absorbed by an expanding job market, however, worker demands increase and cut into profits. This, some analysts say, is what happened in the late 1960s, when the long post-World War II boom reached its crest.

Manipulating the relationship between unemployment and wages has been an objective of economic policy in the United States since the Great Depression. Government planners used fiscal and monetary policies that raised or lowered aggregate demand to smooth out the business cycle. Instead of being allowed to swing from trough to peak to trough again, it was regulated. Moderate recessions were induced every few years, however, to increase unemployment without driving it to dangerous levels. The large number of people looking for work lowered wage demands. The promotion of limited unemployment became a major tool for stabilizing the economy and controlling inflation. In 1958, the publication of the Phillips curve, which shows the inverse correlation between unemployment and wage inflation, lent this strategy the cachet of social science.

In the two decades following World War II, the strategy worked. Cyclical increases in the unemployment rate produced the expected fall-off in the rate of wage increases. By the 1960s, however, the relationship was beginning to weaken, and by the early 1970s it no longer existed. According to Barry Bosworth, head of President Jimmy Carter's Council on Wage and Price Stability from 1977 through 1979, an unemployment rate of 6 percent failed to curb inflation following the recession of 1969-71:

> Economists, at first, viewed the problem as one of lags in the response of prices and wage rates; they recommended patience and a continuation of restrictive policies. By the beginning of 1971, however, wage rate increases had actually accelerated slightly despite high unemployment; and, once excess inventories had been disposed of, the rate of price increases also picked up.

The new element in the picture was the expansion of social welfare benefits, which undermined the historic relationship between unemployment and wages. It is not difficult to see how this happened. If the desperation of the unemployed is reduced by the availability of benefits, there is less pressure on them to take the first job they can find, something that economists quickly realized. As Robert Havemen recently put it, the unemployed can now "prolong [their] job search . . . refuse to accept work except at higher offered wages or cease active labor market participation." Or, as Edgar R. Fiedler, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury

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for Economic Policy in the Ford Administration, explained:

> A change has taken place in the unemployment-inflation trade-off since the mid-1950s. . . . [One reason] is the unemployed today are subject to less economic pain than used to be the case, because of the development of more generous income-maintenance programs. . . . Consequently, most people who lose their jobs today are under less pressure to accept the first offer they get regardless of the pay and working conditions.

Slashing social programs will reinstate the terrors of being without a job. Unemployment benefits will be limited to twenty-six weeks unless joblessness reaches "catastrophic" levels nationwide; moreover, fewer of the unemployed will be eligible for either food stamps or medical benefits. Pressures on the unemployed will be enhanced by adding to their numbers. The dismantling of the jobs programs started under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act added 350,000 people to the labor market. It has already been announced that 400,000 households receiving money under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program will be declared ineligible. The Social Security Administration has accelerated a review, begun under the Carter Administration, of Federal disability payments. Initial reports on 1,300 cases in New York State showed that 38 percent of the aid recipients were not entitled to benefits. The agency expects that 25 percent of the 500,000 cases reviewed nationwide during the next fiscal year will be found to be ineligible. And if the partial Social Security benefits at age 62 are reduced, or if the retirement age is raised to 68, millions of people will be compelled to remain in the labor force. The number of people looking for work will be further enlarged by reductions in housing subsidies, food stamps and Medicaid for the working poor.

Moreover, under the New Federalism, the Reagan Administration is moving to make many income-maintenance programs the responsibility of the states. Food stamp allotments are only the beginning. If this effort succeeds, it will eliminate the equalizing effect of national standards. Benefit levels will be driven down, since state governments are vulnerable to threats from industries to relocate to places where taxes and wages are lower. The decentralization of income-maintenance programs will also antagonize local taxpayers, especially the working poor, who bear the brunt of regressive state sales taxes.

Reagan's "reforms" will thus exert a powerful pressure on people to undersell one another, to take any job at any wage and under any conditions. The effects will be felt by a broad spectrum of people, especially those in the rapidly expanding service sector. Three out of four of those losing benefits will be women, most of them unskilled. They will be hired by the fast-food chains, hotels and offices to cook, serve and clean in competition with the existing low-wage work force, which is already largely female.

At bottom, the Administration holds a two-class view of human nature; it assumes that the rich are very different from the poor and that they require different kinds of incentives. The rich exert themselves for rewards; increase profitability by lowering taxes, for example, and they will step up socially useful investment. The poor, on the other hand, respond to fear and punishment; they must be goaded by hunger, and economic misery makes them more industrious.

In simple and human terms, the welfare state has reduced some of the hardships generated by a market economy that sloughs off the people it no longer needs as it does any other surplus commodity. People have resisted being treated as commodities, believing they had a right to subsistence. And they sometimes fought for that right. The programs of the welfare state were the fruits of those struggles. Moreover, the programs did more than merely protect those with the least power. They grew to a point where they enabled workers to improve their bargaining power. And that is why they are the target of a concerted attack by the privileged and the powerful, with Ronald Reagan serving as chairman of the board. □

HUMAN RIGHTS

Some of Our Best Friends Are Authoritarians

PATRICIA DERIAN

The Reagan Administration has made faint efforts to fake an attitude toward human rights; it has made no effort to implement a policy. Let's look at the record.

§ U.S. representative to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick put forth the theory that authoritarianism is better than totalitarianism. Irving Kristol and other neoconservatives were quick to rally behind this construct. Kirkpatrick claimed that in some places, notably Latin America, the people were not ready for democracy and that authoritarian governments were therefore an understandable, if regrettable, development. Despite right-wing efforts to resuscitate it, the authoritarian-totalitarian dichotomy has, blessedly, been laid to rest. The outrage generated by the description of torture and anti-Semitism in Argentina in Jacobo Timerman's *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number* and the Polish workers' courageous struggle for economic and human rights in a "totalitarian" country showed how false the distinction was.

§ In his mid-January confirmation hearings before the Senate, Secretary of State Alexander Haig responded to a question about his position on the U.S. law prohibiting military and economic assistance to governments that violate human rights by saying, "In general, I support this

Patricia Derian was Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs in the Carter Administration.

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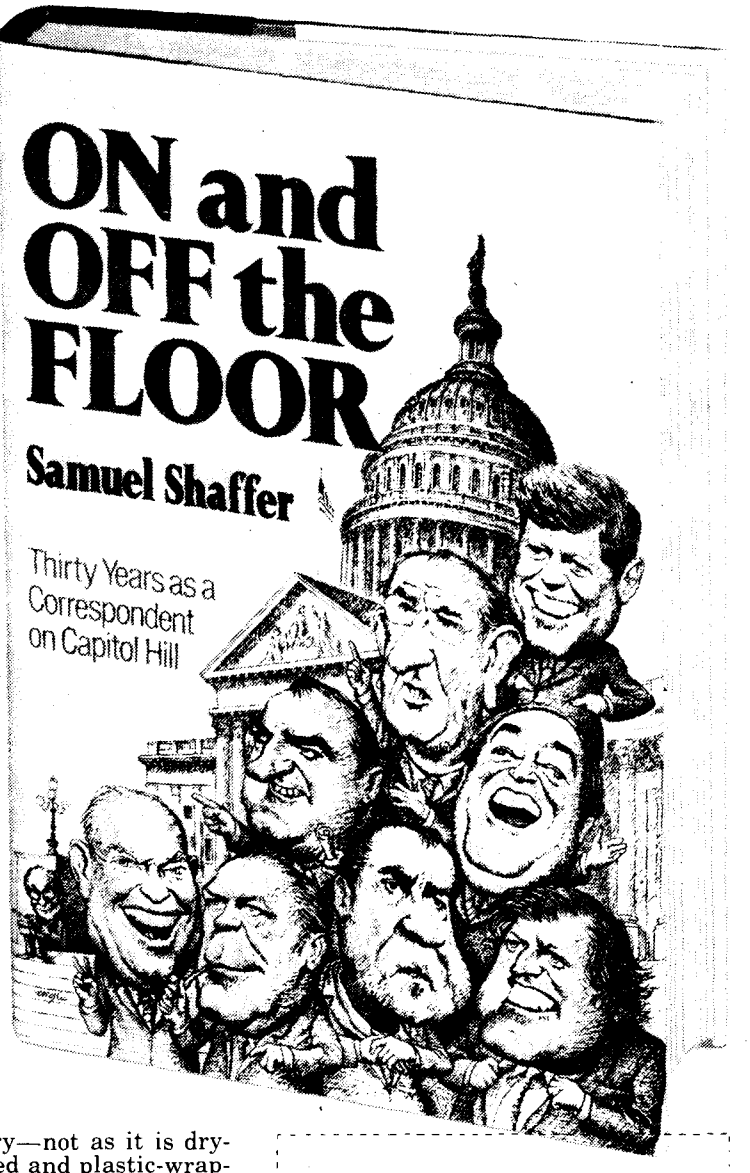

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provision of the Foreign Assistance Act. I do not believe we should, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, provide aid to any country which consistently and in the harshest manner violates the rights of its citizens." But even before the transcripts of that hearing were released, Administration officials were lobbying members of Congress to repeal legislation prohibiting military assistance to Argentina, where the ruling junta and its supporters are responsible for the murders of countless citizens. This same government routinely confiscates property, detains people in prison without pressing charges and practices torture, and it has been charged by human-rights groups with causing the disappearance of approximately 15,000 Argentines.

§ At a late January press conference, Haig said, "International terrorism will take the place of human rights [in] our concern, because it is the ultimate abuse of human rights." At the time Haig made that statement, the United States was continuing its attempt to extradite the terrorists it believes participated, with the approval of the Chilean government, in the Washington, D.C., assassinations of Orlando Letelier, a former minister in Salvador Allende's government, and Ronnie Moffitt, an American citizen and an associate of Letelier's at the Institute for Policy Studies. Immediately after Ronald Reagan's inauguration, the extradition efforts were abandoned, and Chile began to feel the warm sun of American friendship. Chile took part in the annual U.S.-South American naval exercise this year, the ban on Export-Import Bank loans to Chile was lifted, and U.S. representatives to international banks were ordered to support loans to Chile. In addition, Kirkpatrick recently visited Augusto Pinochet, Chile's president. So much for Chilean terrorism. Then, the Reagan Administration, after declaring the Soviet Union to be the greatest supporter of terrorism in the world, abandoned the wheat embargo imposed by Jimmy Carter in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and negotiated new grain sales with the U.S.S.R. No further policy to combat Soviet-supported terrorism has been proposed.

§ On April 30, *The New York Times* quoted President Reagan as having said that "even at the negotiating table, never shall it be forgotten for a moment that wherever it is taking place in the world, the persecution of people for whatever reason . . . persecution of people for their religious belief . . . that is a matter to be on that negotiating table or the United States does not belong at that table." In the same edition of *The Times*, a front-page story reported that "after the speech, a White House spokesman said Mr. Reagan had not meant to alter his policy of playing down the rights issue in foreign relations."

§ The President nominated Ernest Lefever to be Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Lefever's publicly stated views on the subject were (*a*) that all legislation making foreign aid conditional on a nation's observance of human rights should be repealed and (*b*) that human rights had no place in U.S. foreign policy. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with a Republican majority, handed the President his first important defeat by voting 13 to 4 to reject the nomination. Lefever's name was withdrawn even though he modified his views during the confirmation hearings, and no one else has been named to fill the position. (Lefever is now a consultant to the State Department.)

§ Soon after he took office, President Reagan said he thought that South Africa's government was making a good-faith effort to improve its treatment of blacks. Apparently through the error of an inexperienced consular officer, the chief of South Africa's military intelligence and three of his colleagues were granted visas to enter the United States, even though the South African military is barred from this country by law. When their presence here became known, the State Department said that the South Africans had not been received by any U.S. officials. But they were received by Kirkpatrick, whose staff said she had not known who the visitors were, and by a U.S. military intelligence officer, who was described as "an old friend." In October, several South African police officials were allowed to enter the United States to attend an international police conference, and it is rumored that Prime Minister P.W. Botha may soon pay a state visit.

§ The Administration has shown itself to be extremely hospitable to dictators and human-rights abusers. President Chun Doo Hwan, the strongman who ended South Korea's hopes for democracy, was welcomed by Reagan in February. And President Roberto Eduardo Viola of Argentina—elected in 1980 by the three members of Argentina's military junta—was warmly received when he visited Washington in March. Vice President George Bush fawned on President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, pronouncing him a champion of democracy in his remarks last June at Marcos's inauguration for another six-year term.

§ The Administration has so far evaded the human-rights provisions of the International Financial Institutions Act of 1977. By way of explaining its support for loans to South Korea, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, the Administration has claimed that "there have been significant improvements in the human rights situations in these countries . . . the Department has . . . determined that they do not now fall within the standard that would require a 'no' vote or abstention on loans not serving basic human needs."

While some members of the Administration maintain that the defeat of Carter was a direct repudiation of his human-rights policy, others argue that little has changed since the Carter Presidency. Actually, U.S. human-rights policy was

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

Vonnegut Will Take the First

"We hear a great deal these days about the need for a return of the old values. How about a return to the First Amendment of the Constitution? Give me knowledge or give me death?"

—Kurt Vonnegut, at the American Writers Congress, New York City, October 9-12, 1981

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not an issue in the election and so was not "repudiated." But it is also false to say that a reversal of the Carter Administration's policies on human rights has not taken place.

The Reagan Administration's intentions are evident in its warm embrace of dictators and its efforts to eliminate Congressional human-rights reports and to restore and increase aid to repressive governments. Reagan is banking on his ability to keep the public's attention focused on domestic—particularly economic—matters. He is also counting on a post-Iran eagerness to turn away from foreign affairs.

Reagan has made foreign affairs relatively simple. The Soviet menace is so overwhelming and the United States is so weak that we must blindly embrace all anti-Communist governments in order to defend liberty, justice and democracy.

The message to the world is clear: the United States is not serious about human rights. Although it will continue to mouth pieties, this country will not act on behalf of human rights.

But the Administration has been challenged. Democrat Don Bonker, chairman of the House Human Rights and International Organizations Subcommittee, and a handful of others in Congress have repeatedly urged Reagan not to abandon the U.S. commitment to human rights. Senator Christopher Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, who recently visited El Salvador to discuss U.S. military aid, succeeded in making such aid contingent on peace negotiations and an improvement of the Salvadoran record on human rights. Though the Argentine regime is being courted by the U.S. military, arms sales and economic aid are contingent on improvements in the human-rights situation there. The policy is having some effect. The most recent U.S. general to call on the Argentines was reported to have carried a list of conditions for arms sales, including moves toward a democratic government and progress on human rights.

It is likely that even before Reagan's bid for the Presidency, some of his industrialist friends had complained to him of the losses American business had suffered because of human-rights restrictions. They may have convinced Reagan that those off-limits governments with which they wanted to do business had had just provocation for their repressive actions.

Given his preoccupation with the supposed Soviet threat, U.S. business interests abroad and propping up anti-Communist governments, a man who thinks only that the Russians are dangerous, China is big and Africa black (except for the little white tip) will inevitably come up with a disastrous human-rights policy.

I find it difficult to imagine that this can continue for three more years or that the American people will stand for it. Our allies are frightened and may desert us. Our enemies, we can only hope, will not figure out the extent of our disarray before we get back on track. I am far less worried about regaining military superiority over the Soviet Union than I am about a United States that has not been able or willing to develop a foreign policy, and that now has a President who does not care. □

SECRET GOVERNMENT

Don't Let the Sunshine In

RALPH NADER

It is more than Ronald Reagan's aversion to press conferences that marks his Administration's commitment to turning off the flow of government information. Under the pretext of cutting costs and waste, the White House and the Office of Management and Budget have systematically begun to block citizens' access to information about their government and to eliminate information collection and dissemination programs.

The Administration's policy is based on secrecy, reduced access and even censorship, and, like the President's regulatory proposals, its aim is to prevent government agencies from carrying out their statutory missions. Three tactics have been chosen:

§ The introduction of legislation designed to cripple the Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A.);

§ The elimination of programs that collect otherwise concealed data from industry. This information is vital to the formulation of sound public policy and provides Americans with information that is crucial to their health and safety and exercising their rights as consumers;

§ The censorship and destruction of government publications that do not follow the Administration's pro-industry line.

The first signal of the Administration's antagonism toward the public's right to know was Attorney General William French Smith's policy statement on the F.O.I.A. last spring. Smith sent a memorandum to department heads repealing a standard set by former Attorney General Griffin Bell that had directed agencies to release information unless doing so would be "demonstrably harmful." Smith said that the Justice Department would fight court challenges arising from an agency's refusal to release information under the F.O.I.A. Nothing could have been more encouraging to officials eager to operate in secrecy. Essentially, Smith's memorandum changed the government's policy from "when in doubt, disclose," as Congress intended, to "when in doubt, conceal."

For more than fifteen years, through Democratic and Republican administrations, the act has proved to be a useful tool for uncovering dangerous conditions or events that the government has wanted to keep secret—from the Army's spraying of toxic chemicals over American cities to unlawful domestic surveillance by intelligence agencies.

In October, the Administration proposed several changes that would severely weaken the F.O.I.A. Responding to re-

Ralph Nader, the noted consumer advocate and lecturer, is most recently co-editor, with Ronald Brownstein and John Richard, of Who's Poisoning America *(Sierra Club).*

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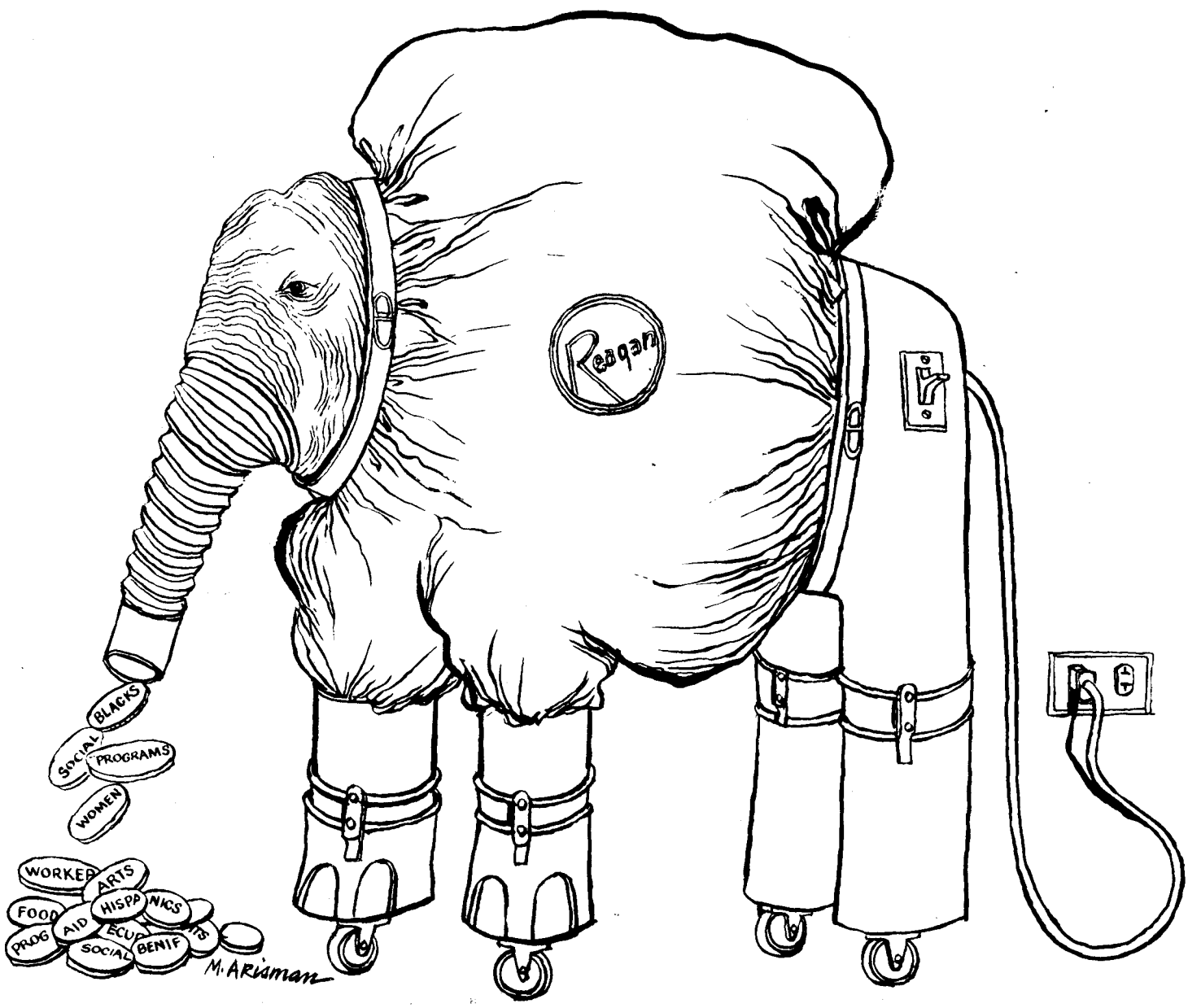
quests from the business community, Reagan called for the exemption of trade secrets and financial information from the act. In addition, desk calendars, phone logs and notes of meetings would no longer be available to public scrutiny.

In a separate move, the Administration announced that it would seek to exempt the Central Intelligence Agency completely from compliance with the act and that it supported the Federal Bureau of Investigation's efforts to institute a moratorium closing all case files for seven years.

The second tactic—the elimination of government programs that collect and analyze information—has been little noted in the press. One such program is the Department of Energy's Financial Reporting System (F.R.S.), which Congress established in 1977. It requires the major oil companies to provide the government with thorough, objective information on their financial activities. Congressional analysts say the information produced by the F.R.S. is invaluable.

The Administration tried to eliminate funding for the F.R.S. in the 1982 budget, claiming that the $1.7 million progam was too expensive to continue. (The Defense Department spends that much almost every seven minutes.) The program was also said to be burdensome to the oil companies. But, according to Energy Department officials, supplying the required information takes a company two "person-years" (two employees working a year)—certainly not much to ask of government-subsidized companies that employ tens of thousands of people.

The Administration's real problem with the F.R.S. is that the oil companies don't like it. They do not want it publicly known that their revenues are taxed by the Federal government at an average rate of only 19 percent. And they do not want to disclose how they are spending the money pouring in from the decontrol of domestic oil prices, which was supposed to fund accelerated production, not the acquisition of mining companies and department stores. The industry fought the government's authority to require F.R.S. reports



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all the way to the Supreme Court, but the Court refused to hear the case.

The House of Representatives, acknowledging that the F.R.S. is a bargain, voted to increase the program's budget slightly in 1982. But, following the recommendation of the Office of Management and Budget, the Senate voted to eliminate it. And so the fate of the F.R.S. remains uncertain.

This example is not an isolated one. The Administration withdrew its support for proposals before the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that would require manufacturers to furnish to the government basic toxicological information on the thousands of new chemicals introduced in the marketplace every year, some of which can cause cancer, birth defects and other health problems. The Administration has also suspended rules requiring drug manufacturers to provide consumers with information on the proper use of drugs and their possible adverse side effects and rules requiring manufacturers to label clearly all hazardous chemicals used in the workplace. The Federal Communications Commission has drastically reduced the amount of information required on TV and radio license renewal forms, which in the past provided ammunition for community groups challenging franchise holders. The commission's chairman, Mark Fowler, is leading a drive to end the requirement that broadcasters file annual financial reports. So it goes.

This clamp-down on the release of information that some industries do not want made public has been applied to whistle blowers as well. Thorne G. Auchter, head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, tried to remove Dr. Peter Infante, director of OSHA's carcinogen office, after Infante sent a letter to the International Agency for Research on Cancer criticizing an I.A.R.C. working group's methods in a study that concluded there was only "limited" evidence that formaldehyde causes cancer.

That letter drew howls of protest from the Formaldehyde Institute, which had persuaded Auchter not to join with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in distributing a bulletin recommending that formaldehyde be considered a potential carcinogen. After Infante's case touched off acrimonious Congressional hearings and adverse publicity, Auchter backed down. The message, though, was surely not lost on other government scientists. OSHA's refusal to support the study on formaldehyde points up the third tactic of Reagan's anti-information policy: the selective censorship of government publications.

Last spring, the O.M.B. issued Bulletin 81-16, which placed a moratorium on both old and new government pamphlets, movies and publications. But the moratorium has been a selective one, aimed primarily at publications that run counter to the Administration's ideological bent or that have drawn opposition from powerful industries.

In the latter category was *The Car Book*, which compiled the results of the government's auto safety and mileage tests and other information useful to car buyers [see editorial, "The Paper Chase," *The Nation*, June 20]. Much to the consternation of the auto industry, more than 1.5 million

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Americans requested the publication. Secretary of Transportation Drew Lewis called the book "anti-industry" and withdrew the unpaid public-service messages on radio and television announcing its availability. In August, Lewis decided not to reprint the book when the current supply was exhausted, making it clear that in addition to opposing the government setting stricter auto safety standards, he has no interest in providing consumers with the information they need to make the free market work.

Some publications managed to slip through the moratorium. One of them was the Defense Department's glossy brochure "Soviet Military Power," which is of limited interest to the average taxpayer. An even more egregious violation of the moratorium occurred in August, when the Commerce Department issued a guide for businesses interested in exporting energy technology to Soviet bloc countries. The guide was issued even as the Administration was pressing West Germany not to expand its energy trade with the Soviet Union through the financing and construction of the Siberian natural gas pipeline. Asked about the guide, a Commerce official said: "Is there a moratorium on new publications?" Closer to home, Nancy Reagan's sixteen-page program on the Easter festivities at the White House also eluded O.M.B.'s watchful eye.

Now, O.M.B. has issued a directive requiring all agencies to submit pamphlets and periodicals to Budget Director David Stockman for approval. Those not approved will be canceled by March 15.

The shortsightedness of clamping down on most government publications is obvious, particularly in a time of budgetary cutbacks. These publications are among the most cost-effective of all government activities, for they empower citizens to use the laws themselves. They help prevent consumer disputes that otherwise might have to be settled by government agencies.

Government information programs are particularly vulnerable to assaults by the budget slashers. There is no organized constituency or lobbying group that will speak up for them. Who, for instance, lobbies for the Government Printing Office? Who will challenge the staggering increases in the prices of various government publications the Reagan Administration has proposed—among them an increase in the cost of an annual subscription to the *Federal Register* from $75 to $200?

But the Administration's efforts to limit, and in some cases to cut off, the flow of government studies, documents, pamphlets and other material affects everyone. As the Administration is well aware, only the most powerful gain when government turns off the lights. That is the real waste and fraud in its anti-information policy.

The advocates of secrecy, suppression, censorship and sky-high pricing are blocking the public's right to know, and thus its right to participate in government decisions. A government out of reach becomes a government controlled by the few—and the best vehicle for carrying out the authoritarian philosophy of Reagan's corporate state. It can only be stopped if the media, scholars and all citizens who believe in open government join in opposing it. □

ENVIRONMENT

Pollution is Our Most Important Product

JAMES RIDGEWAY

If it were guided by history, the Reagan Administration, with its concern for a more productive economy, would embrace the goals of the environmental movement.

The environmental movement originated in the sanitation reforms proposed by business during the Industrial Revolution. The reforms were intended to improve public health and reduce disease, thereby increasing the productivity of workers. Sir Edwin Chadwick, Britain's most dogged proponent of sanitation in the nineteenth century, argued that wastes should be recycled for productive uses (sewage, for example, could be converted into fertilizer).

At the turn of the century, President Theodore Roosevelt argued that conservation resulted in greater economic efficiency. In the mid-1930s, Representative Karl Mundt, a conservative Republican from South Dakota who went on to serve in the Senate, joined with such groups as the Izaak Walton League in pushing for a strong Federal water-pollution control program as part of a comprehensive system of national waterways. The Democrats, fearful of hurting small industries still staggering from the Depression, opposed the regional approach and defeated it.

In short, environmentalism has never been a socialist or "radical" concept. It was an invention of business, and its aim was increased productivity. Its proponents today generally claim to favor free enterprise, competition and localism; conservative by temperament, they are mainly white and belong to the middle class. The movement, which succeeded the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1950s and 1960s, enjoys widespread popularity. Fifty-one percent of the people interviewed in a recent Harris poll favored keeping the Clean Air Act in its present form, while another 29 percent wanted to make it even tougher. Only 17 percent thought the present law was too strict.

A recent study by Data Resources Inc., a private research organization, concluded that pollution control legislation would create 524,000 jobs between 1980 and 1987; it would also stimulate investment and cause an average annual consumer price increase of only 0.4 percent.

Nonetheless, the Reagan Administration remains opposed to environmental regulations and to the environmentalists. It believes that the "free market," not the government,

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James Ridgeway writes a political column, with Alexander Cockburn, for The Village Voice *and is the author of several books on energy and the environment.*

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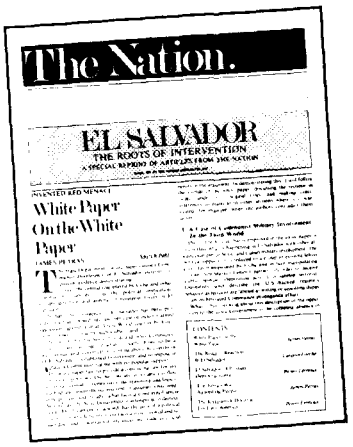

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should allocate capital resources. Conservative politicians are out to defeat the dwindling band of moderate Republicans whose ideas and policies probably best embody the spirit of modern environmentalism.

The Administration has joined battle on several fronts. First, there is a move to eviscerate the Environmental Protection Agency. The President has proposed a 60 percent reduction in the E.P.A.'s real spending (that is, budgetary cuts of 42 percent plus the losses from a 15 percent to 20 percent inflation rate during the 1982 and 1983 fiscal years), and that 40 percent of the agency's staff be fired. These cuts and staff reductions come at a time when the agency's workload has doubled. During the next two years, the E.P.A. must enforce standards on toxic chemicals that Congress mandated in 1979.

The budget reductions also mean that funding for research to develop standards on permissible exposure to toxic chemicals will be eliminated. The projected cuts in Federal grants to states will curtail environmental programs at the state and local level.

According to William Drayton, Assistant Administrator for Planning at the E.P.A. under Jimmy Carter: "Right now, the E.P.A. should be hiring the soil hydrologists, toxicologists and other skilled technicians it needs to determine whether or not the hazardous waste disposal sites it must certify are safe or not. If the E.P.A. can't hire the staff it needs to do the job, who will? Few towns or states could afford such people even before Proposition 13 and Reagan cuts in Federal aid. Consequently, this country and the E.P.A. will mistakenly certify unsafe sites—hurting affected citizens and communities, running down the E.P.A.'s technical credibility and eventually making it less and less likely that communities will accept any disposal operations."

In addition to gutting the E.P.A., the government has moved in Federal District Court in Washington, D.C., to delay the implementation of water-quality standards. The action is directed against a plan setting standards for the discharge of effluents containing sixty-five known toxic chemicals, many of them carcinogens. Industry wants the Federal District judge to throw out the standard-setting procedure and has already managed to delay its enforcement. Now the government is asking for a further delay, until 1983. At the same time, it is seeking to transfer the responsibility for setting standards to the states and industry. This represents a regression to the states' rights approach to water-pollution control of the late 1950s, which was notoriously ineffective. The government offers budgetary hardship as the reason for delay and points to projected cuts of 20 percent to 25 percent in funding and personnel at the E.P.A. division charged with settling effluent guidelines. But the cuts, of course, are the Administration's own doing. And beyond all this, the E.P.A. insists that even if standards are set, compliance will not be expected until well into the 1990s.

Since mid-June, the government has drafted five sets of "improvement" amendments to the Clean Air Act, which expires this year, and each successive draft is more crippling.

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The Administration proposes to weaken virtually every control in the act. The draft legislation would repeal the duty of the Federal government to designate the air pollutants for which standards must be set. The government would be given considerable "discretion" in setting ambient air standards, and the use of cost-benefit analysis would be permitted. The draft law would eliminate existing regulations in places where the air is now clean and increase the dangers posed by acid rain by permitting higher amounts of pollution from automobiles and electrical generating plants. It would reduce public participation in the standard-setting procedure and make enforcement difficult. For example, the requirement that air-quality monitoring data be made available to the E.P.A. and to the public would be eliminated, and the Federal and state governments would be given complete discretion to set deadlines for complying with standards. In sum, the Administration's draft amendments to the Clean Air Act would render the law meaningless.

Meanwhile, all manner of industries are yelping for a relaxation of the standards affecting them. One of the biggest polluters, the auto industry, is behind a bill to relax emission standards that is being supported in the House by John Dingell, Democrat of Michigan, and also has the backing of the United Automobile Workers. If enacted, which seems unlikely at this time, the bill would reduce the price of a new $10,000 car by $80 to $350, but add untold medical costs due to increased pollution.

The Clean Air Act will probably not be renewed until next year, if then. But cuts in the E.P.A. budget and staff mean that scientific research and the implementation of standards will be severely curtailed. The enforcement of standards will be left largely to citizen groups challenging violations in the courts. But such groups are few and generally lack funds and expertise.

Thus, the Reagan Administration proceeds on several fronts, deliberately dismantling the environmental control apparatus built up since the 1950s. The result will be a rise in diseases related to environmental pollution; there will be more Love Canals and increased danger from acid rain. More than a century and a half after the height of the Industrial Revolution, the economic and human costs of pollution have not changed. In the nineteenth century, however, business advocated improving public health through environmental controls as a step toward widening markets and productivity. That vision apparently has been lost. Instead, industry and government are now joined in a belief that the American economy can prosper through a growing epidemic of environmentally-related diseases. That is the botton line of the attack on the environmentalists.

As Governor Jerry Brown of California pointed out during the 1980 Presidential campaign, if you make $10,000 a year, you will contribute $30,000 to the Gross National Product in three years. But if environmental pollution gives you cancer, the cost of your medical treatment will add $100,000 to the G.N.P. in just one year. Shorn of rhetoric, that is precisely the kind of economic growth Reagan seeks and will probably get as a result of his attack on regulations intended to clean up the environment. □

ARTICLE.

LIBYAN LETTER

The View from the Shores of Tripoli

ELIZABETH COLTON

Tripoli

All the saber rattling since the assassination of Anwar el-Sadat has caused much concern here in Libya's capital. Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has blamed the United States for the heightened tensions, insisting that it, along with Egypt and the Sudan, is preparing for war against Libya. While repeating his offer to talk over differences between his country and the United States, Qaddafi said he was not afraid to fight, even if it meant that all of his people must die "defending their land." "We are preparing ourselves for war against America, because we believe America is preparing for war against us," he said.

Colonel Qaddafi and the Libyans are not the only ones here who accuse the United States of fomenting a crisis. Many diplomats representing U.S. allies and Americans working for the oil industry and agriculture have expressed similar sentiments. "The U.S. policy of confrontation with Libya is disastrous," said one European diplomat, who, like others I spoke to, did not want his name used. "But as in Europe, the American government pays no attention to our views."

The American manager of an agricultural project here charged, "It is our own government that is causing us trouble, not the Libyans. . . . I constantly have to calm my relatives in the States because all they hear are scare stories. We have had no problems from the Libyans." An American oil worker added, "The United States has frankly shirked its responsibilities to its own citizens. Now the government is trying to get us out of Libya just so they can feel safe attacking it, but we've refused to go so far."

Some Western diplomats opine that the large number of Britons and Americans working at the oil refineries near Sidra have frustrated U.S. plans for an attack. The State Department has repeatedly tried to persuade the approximately 2,000 Americans working in Libya to leave. In early 1980, a few months after its embassy had been stormed by a mob, the United States pulled out all of its diplomats. In February 1980, the French Embassy was extensively damaged by a similar attack, but the French are still here, carrying on business as usual, and the Libyan government is rebuilding their embassy. A European ambassador said, "The United States is making a big mistake. I do not believe they had any real grounds for leaving Libya. Certainly worse happened to the American Embassy in Pakistan in

Elizabeth Colton is a producer for ABC News in Libya.

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1979, and now the United States is back there in force."

Relations between the United States and Libya have deteriorated precipitously since President Ronald Reagan took office. In May 1981, the United States expelled the staff of the Libyan Embassy in Washington, D.C., charging that they were involved in a program of assassination directed against anti-Qaddafi Libyans living in America. The following month, Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, announced that the United States would aid any African country that was resisting "Libyan aggression." Soon thereafter, the Sudan, Egypt and Somalia announced that Libyan meddling was behind most of the problems in their countries. The United States duly responded with pledges of military aid.

Next, in a move that was bound to goad Qaddafi, the U.S. government sent its Sixth Fleet, including the aircraft carrier Nimitz, to the Gulf of Sidra, which is claimed by Libya. U.S. jets from the Nimitz shot down two Libyan jets that had reportedly fired first. Whatever the legality of Libya's territorial claim, much of the world viewed the American military maneuvers in the gulf as unduly provocative and unnecessary.

Following Sadat's assassination, two U.S. Awacs planes were sent to Egypt for the express purpose of helping Egypt guard its border with Libya. The Libyan government responded with three demands: that the Awacs be withdrawn, that the United States cancel "its provocative aggressive maneuvers" planned for November in Egypt, in which troops from America, Egypt, the Sudan, Somalia and Oman will participate, and that the Sixth Fleet be withdrawn from Arab shores.

During the celebration of the twelfth anniversary of Libya's revolution, which took place shortly after the dogfight over the Gulf of Sidra, Qaddafi warned the United States that he would not hesitate to retaliate against future intrusions. He suggested that attacks on American bases in Crete and Turkey were one option, and he warned the United States that its hostility might force him to seek protection from the Soviet Union. Most analysts who have followed Qaddafi's revolution agree that he does not want to be aligned with the Russians, and that American allegations that he is a Soviet agent are groundless.

Qaddafi has internal problems of his own. The economy has been badly hurt by the current world oil glut, and demand for premium-priced Libyan oil ($40 a barrel) has declined. There is also simmering discontent among members of the middle class who had their property expropriated in Qaddafi's revolution. Most of the country's 3 million people, however, have enjoyed a rising standard of living since Qaddafi came to power and continue to support the government. It is among the army that the greatest potential threat to his rule may lie. Although the soldiers are well paid, Qaddafi's military buildup has stirred rebelliousness among young men who are being drafted for an indefinite period of time. Many of them are shipped to fight in Chad against guerrillas opposed to the Libyan-backed regime of Goukouni Oueddei.

Qaddafi denies that he is the world's leading exporter of terrorism, as has been charged by the Central Intelligence Agency. Even critics of his regime must admit that much of what is known about Libyan terrorists, including the murders of Libyan dissidents living abroad, has come from revelations in the U.S. press about the role played by former employees of the C.I.A. in training them.

No one here can guess what will happen next. Both Western and Libyan officials doubt that Qaddafi would attack Egypt or the Sudan. Col. Abdul Kabir, the commander of the Libyan forces in Chad, has said, "The rebel forces of [Hissen] Habré, supported by the Sudanese, have been coming into Chad, but we have been very careful not to go over the Sudanese border in chasing them out of Chad."

Reports that the U.S. State Department was considering "punitive actions" against Libya, including an embargo of its oil in an effort to undermine its economy, were widely believed here. Last year, only 8 percent of U.S. oil imports came from Libya, but these represented 30 percent of Libya's total exports. The Reagan Administration has also reportedly considered an embargo on American-made spare parts needed by the Libyan oil industry, but few here believe that Western Europe would support a U.S. boycott.

In addition to stepping up its efforts to convince U.S. citizens to leave Libya, the State Department is said to have a plan that would make it illegal for them to travel here. Many Americans living here believe that such a move would be the Administration's retaliation against U.S. citizens who have defied their government's warnings that Libya is not safe.

Why the United States has backed Qaddafi into a corner is a mystery to Western diplomats here, who insist that the United States could have befriended Libya's leader. Qaddafi has frequently said that he wants discussions with the United States and that he would like to re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries, but the United States has refused to respond to his overtures.

In late October, on American television, Qaddafi repeated his willingness to negotiate: "With the United States we are ready to discuss any problems. But we would tell them that they have to respect us and to establish normal relations like any other relationship between any other countries in the world."

Instead, the U.S. government appears to be trying to force Qaddafi to commit a rash act that would give the Sudan or the United States an excuse to attack Libya—or so many people here believe. An American Foreign Service officer familiar with Libya said, "This [campaign] against Libya is a political decision of the new Administration. Eventually, in a year or so, they will find it won't work, and then the U.S. will have to try another method of working with Libya."

But by then it may be too late. As one leading Western diplomat in Tripoli said last week, "The U.S. has put Qaddafi in an awkward position. It can only be to create a crisis that would lead to American intervention in the area. That is a very short-sighted policy." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Way We Are

GENE LYONS

RABBIT IS RICH. *By John Updike. Alfred A. Knopf. 467 pp. $13.95.*

Like many authors whose reputations have been established in *The New Yorker*, John Updike has enjoyed a certain degree of critical immunity. No novel of his that I can recall—not even the ludicrous *Rabbit Redux*, surely the worst by a "name" writer during the 1970s—has been savaged by reviewers as it might have been. But the word has been out on the street anyway; among the people I know who read and discuss contemporary fiction, Updike's name often produces groans and execrations. They loved *Rabbit, Run* or *The Centaur*, they may say, but it's been all hot air and foolishness since then. Pretty sentences, yes, although always a handful undecipherable by native speakers of English; but for the rest of it, characters, plot, themes—in sum, all those qualities expressive of the Updike world view—forget it. Most annoying seems to be his habit of hiding the deity somewhere in the story as in one of those line drawings in a comic book—"Kids! See if you can find Little Lulu and Tubby hidden in the jungle!" It's too easy: find the pubic hair and you've found God.

Now that my credentials are in order, here's the surprise: *Rabbit is Rich*, Updike's third book about the one-time high school basketball star from Brewer, Pennsylvania, turned seeker after love and grace, is more than the author's best work in many years. It is a beautifully written, compassionate, knowing and wise novel by an at-last mature writer working at a level he has always had the capacity to attain, but seemed destined never to reach. Even near the end, when God is once again descried by Harry Angstrom hiding in a hitherto unsuspected aperture, most readers, I think, will be sufficiently grateful and, yes, moved by what has gone before that they will grant Updike his obsession and let it go at that.

Gene Lyons lives in Little Rock, Arkansas. He has written for Harper's, Texas Monthly *and other magazines.*

One has only to compare *Rabbit is Rich* with its predecessor in the Angstrom series to see how far Updike has brought himself. *Rabbit Redux* was awful for reasons both mimetic and technical. As a portrayal of American life, it was so heavy-handed and humorless as to take on the texture of propaganda. Updike gave the impression that he hadn't been among the working people in his home district in a long time. Image followed image of ugliness, sterility, decay, racial hostility and betrayal. Rabbit could not so much as slip down to the "Burger Bliss" without our being hit with an almost allegorical description of a "Lunar Special (double cheeseburger with an American flag stuck in the bun) and a vanilla milkshake, that tastes toward the bottom of chemical sludge." If Rabbit didn't like the taste, I remember wondering, why didn't he send out for a pizza? If he did like it, inasmuch as the book was ostensibly written from a third-person point of view in which Updike had implicitly agreed to see things as Angstrom saw them, who was talking to us?

The Brewer, Pennsylvania, of that novel was hell: crime-ridden and full of desperately violent blacks. The suburbs, where Rabbit lived with his ghastly, loveless family, were utterly barren. Although Rabbit had been a star athlete in the town and had never left it, no one on the street ever knew or recognized him. While he worked a linotype machine in the same factory as his father, Rabbit belonged to no union, company team, Moose, Masons, Eagles, Elks, Lions, Odd Fellows, nothing. He had no male friends and, most astonishing of all, was unknown to the bartender and the patrons of the tavern to which he and his father went "almost every afternoon" for a beer and a daiquiri, the ordering of which in and of itself would have made him a celebrity in any workingman's bar I've ever been in.

Now a novelist is entitled to whatever vision of the world he can make credible. If Updike had wanted to be an American Céline, a critic would have had to respect him for it, although not necessarily give him credence. But when it came to the couplings, Updike's "symbolic" squirmings made it clear that his was less a vision than simply a view down *The New Yorker*'s tasteful nose. I have written about this aspect of Updike's work before in *The Nation* [see "Cultural Deformations," February 3, 1979], but since one of the remarkable things about *Rabbit is Rich* is that in it the author seems to have abandoned what had become a characteristic and very dishonest approach to fictive meaning, perhaps readers will indulge me one more time.

Through most of *Rabbit Redux,* Updike's use of language was realistic, i.e., he pretended what we all pretend about words every day: that they have concrete referents, and that the stories in which they appear are therefore, in some sense, true. One can object, as I have, that aspects of the world depicted are unrepresentative, but we must grant the writer his given. After all, we can argue with it. But in *Rabbit Redux*, as well as in *The Coup*, whenever certain characters and subjects intrude, Updike shifts gears and sticks in "symbols," which refer to a whole layer of meaning with an implied morality often at odds with the logic of the story. This meaning cannot be argued with because the narrator never acknowledges rhetorically that it exists. Christ figures and crucifixes lurk not only in the genitalia but in every metaphor. And by such symbolic dispensation, some characters are morally accountable for what they do and others are not.

In *Rabbit Redux*, the beneficiary was Skeeter, an angry black man who lived with Rabbit for a time after his wife left him and who, by forcing a drug-crazed young thing also in residence to fellate him in front of a well-lit picture window, provoked the neighbors to burn the house down. Skeeter got out, but the young thing, unconscious from a heroin overdose he had given her, burned to death. So who was Skeeter? Well, on the realistic level of the novel, he was an irresponsible and perhaps murderous creep. In symbol-gram terms, though, he was Christ, and his name was spelled on a police radio "Sally-Katherine-double Easter." Rabbit last saw him "waiting for the word" in a field where crows gleaned next to a sign which read "Galilee 2." I think I threw the book across the room.

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Well, enough of that. One of the first things we learn in *Rabbit is Rich* is that Skeeter, a.k.a. Hubert Johnson, is dead. Rabbit has rejoined his family and has inherited his father-in-law's Toyota dealership. He has also rejoined the real world, and by putting it that way I do not mean at all to slight the wonderfully nuanced and sociologically accurate rendition Updike gives of the very particular world his characters live in. What I mean to say is that Updike has gone from being a junior varsity Céline to a Balzac, from a superficially rendered version of the lower orders to a brilliantly detailed and sympathetic portrayal of an American city in all its banal and heart-rending beauty. Here is what Rabbit thinks of his son's awkward fiancée:

> She breathed that air he'd forgotten, of high school loveliness, come uninvited to bloom in the shadow of railroad overpasses, alongside telephone poles, within earshot of highways with battered aluminum center strips, out of mothers gone to lard and fathers ground down by gray days of work and more work, in an America littered with bottlecaps and pull-tabs and pieces of broken muffler. Rabbit remembered such beauty, seeing it caught here in Pru, in her long downy arms and skinny bangled wrists and the limp fall of her carrot-pale hair.

I don't see how any half-patriot could resist that, or any of the long passages in which Updike simply takes a musing Harry Angstrom the long way home through the heart of the decaying city.

> Railroads and coal made Brewer. Everywhere in this city, once the fourth largest in Pennsylvania but now slipped to seventh, structures speak of expended energy. Great shapely stacks that have not issued smoke for half a century. Scrolling cast-iron light stanchions replaced by stark aluminum. The lower blocks of Weiser given over to the sale of the cut-rate and the X-rated and the only new emporium a new windowless enlargement in the white brick of Schoenbaum Funeral Directors. The old textile plants given over to discount clothing outlets that live in the huge shells like parasites in dead whales, teeming with a false gaudy cheer of banners FACTORY FAIR and slogans *Where the Dollar Is Still a Dollar.* The acres of dead railroad track and car shops and stockpiled wheels and empty boxcars stuck in the heart of the city like a great rusting dagger. All this had been cast up in the last century by what now seem giants.

And in the next century, should there be anyone who is interested in how we were, they can find out here.

As nearly as I can make out, Rabbit is pulling down about $40,000 to $45,000 a year from the Toyota dealership, which by his lights is a lot, particularly since he and Janice live with her mother in the old lady's house and don't have to buy a car either. More than that, Angstrom is no longer a lone demento in his home town. Pictures and clippings from his days as a basketball star adorn the dealership's walls. He's got lots of friends now, including one who played ball with him. He plays golf out at the Flying Eagle Tee and Racquet Club, a second- or third-string club for the newly prosperous who are not welcome at the Brewer Country Club. Janice, like so many women of her social class now in their 40s, is turning herself into a suntanned tennis machine. They drink together, the Angstroms and their friends, both at the club and at their homes. They guffaw and nudge one another about sex.

They have some wonderful grab-ass conversations, familiar enough to make most of us wince now and again, about the causes of inflation, what's wrong with Jimmy Carter and why blacks are taking over professional sports. But there is no condescension here, none of that childish derisiveness so many American writers descend to when describing the commercial classes, as if everyone who is neither an artist nor a pedagogue must by definition be a callow, ignorant, amoral buffoon. Among other things, Updike has evidently spent enough time finding out what automobile dealers do from day to day to place Rabbit firmly and accurately within an ethical framework. As it turns out, he's pretty honest. In short, everything that was wrong with *Rabbit Redux*, and a lot of other novels like it, is not only right but triumphantly right in *Rabbit is Rich*. Out with it: I wish I'd written the book myself. But I couldn't have. A critic who tends to be, well, very critical, needs to be reminded of that once in a while, just as it would do Howard Cosell a lot of good to put on spikes and try to hit Rollie Fingers's sinker in front of 45,000 fans and a national TV audience.

I hope I have not implied that Updike has written a "what's right with America" novel and by so doing earned my admiration. Rabbit's got his troubles. Among them is his son Nelson, who is turning out to be a lot like his father when it comes to growing up and accepting responsibility for his actions—at least that's how Rabbit sees it. Janice and her mother force Rabbit—actually called "Harry" most of the time now—to fire a trusted employee and friend to give Nelson a start in the business. But either Nelson is disastrously bad at it or his father won't give him, or can't give him, enough responsibility and breathing room to make a go of it. The scenes between them are excruciating to anyone who has ever been a son or a father, or, for that matter, a mother or a sister. Please don't say, this reader kept wanting to tell these characters, don't do, what you can't help doing. I'm no admirer of shrinks, yet much of the time I felt like Ann Landers. I wanted everybody to seek professional help or the advice of his pastor.

Here's how it goes. Nelson wants to bring a girl home with him from Colorado, where he has gone to look for work after nearly flunking out of Kent State. Rabbit thinks it's a bad idea and sides with his mother-in-law against his wife. He accuses his son of being a freeloader:

> "Oh, money," Janice says. "And what have *you* ever done except hang around here? Your father got you one job and my father got you another, I don't call that any great adventure."
>
> "That's not all I think about," he begins lamely, of money, before his mother-in-law interrupts.
>
> "Harry doesn't want a home of his own," Ma Springer tells her daughter. When she gets excited and fearful of not making herself understood her face puffs up like a child's and goes mottled. "He has such disagreeable associations from the last time you two went out on your own."

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Janice is firm, younger, in control. "Mother, you know nothing about it. You know nothing about life period. You sit in this house and watch idiotic game shows and talk on the phone to what friends you have that haven't died off yet and then sit in judgment on Harry and me. You know *nothing* of life now. You have no *idea*."

"As if playing games at a country club with the nickel rich and coming home tiddled every night is enough to make you wise," the old lady comes back, holding on with one hand to the knob of the newel post as if to ease the pain in her ankles. "You come home," she goes on, "too silly to make your husband a decent supper and then want to bring this tramp into a house where I do all the housekeeping, even if I can scarcely stand to stand. I'm the one that would be here with them, you'd be off in that convertible. What will the neighbors make of it? What about the people in the church?"

Whee! If you've never been in that household, gentle reader, then you really owe it to yourself to buy and read this book, underlining important passages with a yellow Magic Marker. Because most of your fellow Amurkins, as L.B.J. used to say, live there now. And it's not a lot of fun, much of the time, although most of us would also agree, with Rabbit and his brood, that it's got its moments.

But there is no way out of it, Updike is now wise enough to know, through symbolic transmogrification, although there is, as I mentioned earlier, just one embarrassing scene near the end when Rabbit apprehends an important spiritual insight with his "single eye," which is to say the blind one on the end of what *Penthouse* magazine would call his "pleasure pole," while that organ is buried in the anus of somebody else's wife. Well, it wouldn't be Updike without it (although if I *had* written the novel, I'd have cut it), but it isn't made into the agency of anybody's salvation, either, as it might have been ten or more years ago. In the end, Rabbit is more or less stuck in the middle of life where we found him, along with most of the rest of us, only now he's a grandfather. And a whole lot readier for *that*, if you can recall *Rabbit, Run*, than he was to be a father. For which we can all thank John Updike. I hope the Book of the Month Club sells a lot of copies and that the author wins a lot of prizes. He deserves them, and I don't think anybody would say he hasn't earned his due. □

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Red Herring

SAUL LANDAU

THE FISH IS RED: The Story of the Secret War Against Castro. *By Warren Hinckle and William W. Turner. Harper & Row. 373 pp. $15.50.*

Don't judge this book by its back cover. Eldridge Cleaver calls it "a block buster of a book." It isn't. Studs Terkel says it "is perhaps the definitive book on one of our most clownish adventures." It isn't.

The overt intentions of *The Fish is Red* are to tell us at long last the story of our government's secret war against Fidel Castro and thereby to revise the history of U.S.-Cuban and U.S.-Soviet relations. On both counts the book falls short. Any pretense at a serious revision of history is persistently compromised by a glib, even cute, style and by a seesaw chronology that leaves the reader with a sort of *mal de texte*.

The book does add something, however, to the rapidly growing literature of disclosure. Warren Hinckle and William Turner offer new details to fill out the old stories about how the Central Intelligence Agency's need for assassins led it to join operations with the Mafia, which in turn led to the corruption of the White House during the reigns of several Presidents. And the authors also give us a fresh look at how the nether world of secret agents and gangsters actually functioned when orders came down to kill.

To make its dirty tricks work, the C.I.A. had to use the mass media, which, through direct payoffs and the manipulation of an old-boy network, did the agency's bidding. The C.I.A. also dipped into the worlds of finance and publishing, creating a large and informal apparatus with which it could then disinform a larger public and ultimately trick President John Kennedy himself. This is, of course, appalling stuff, but *The Fish is Red* often distracts us from the importance of its material by delivering it in a wrapping of sophomoric wit. One New York City press agent on Ngo Dinh Diem's payroll, write Hinckle and Turner, "planted glossy features in American popular magazines—most notably *Look*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Life*, the sunken and lately refloated Niña, Pinta and Santa Maria of the mass circulation slicks." Such is the lighthearted tone of a book whose authors cannot reconcile their sense of morality with their desire to shine and entertain.

But as long as readers don't take the book's promise to rewrite history and tell the whole story too seriously, they can enjoy cringing at the exploits of shady photojournalist Andrew St. George as he recounts his adventures with C.I.A.-sponsored Cuban exile terrorists on raids to the island, and at the tales of mercenaries like Gerry Patrick Hemming, who regales us with assassination plots and conspiracy theories. The book is journalism, not history; nor is it even about the making of history. It reads like a series of exciting—but sometimes mundane—Jack Anderson columns, stuffed with explosive tidbits, juicy gossip and just plain filler. A progressive anti-Castro Cuban is described as being "tossed aside like an old taco" by the C.I.A., and right-wing fanatics purchase arms from an Illinois gun dealer who is "considered the Abercrombie and Fitch of the paramilitary right." But for those unread in the literature of assassination and dirty tricks, *The Fish is Red* may be a useful introduction to the sleazy world of covert action.

Hinckle and Turner's main effort is to build a case against John and Robert Kennedy by insisting that they never relinquished the idea of assassinating Castro. The authors suggest that after unleashing the dirty warriors of the Mafia and the C.I.A., John Kennedy himself became their victim. But they do not know enough to do more than sketch in this interpretation. They appear to have terminated their research in the mid-1970s, and they did not utilize key sources inside Cuba and among House Assassination Committee staffers. Furthermore, the book is not informed by Castro's own comments about the Kennedy affair. The Cuban leader gave Frank Mankiewicz a detailed description of the meeting he had with journalist Jean Daniel on the day the President was assassinated, which included the agenda Kennedy had proposed that Daniel raise with Castro. Evidence of this nature vitiates the

Saul Landau is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies and co-author of Assassination on Embassy Row *(Pantheon).*

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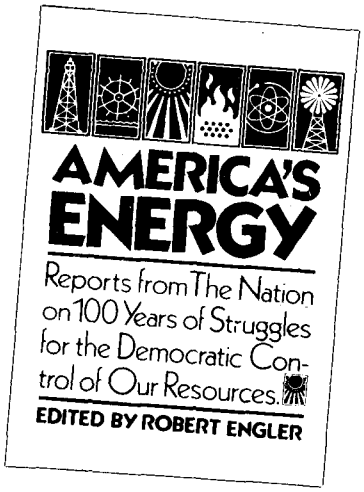
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Hinckle-Turner thesis that the Kennedys would stop at nothing to get Castro.

But despite the book's deficiencies, it does force the reader to conclude from all its multileveled stories of murder and sabotage, coverups and double dealings, that the secret war cannot simply be brought to a close, not even by Presidential decree. It has become an ongoing part of U.S. diplomacy. The study of foreign policy will no longer rest on the examination of pacts and treaties, tariffs and commercial agreements, but will have to take into account the politics of assassination and subversion as key elements in the shaping of alliances and even of social history. Our society, as well as many in Latin America, suffered from the fallout from the Bay of Pigs. Certainly the aftermath of such failed operations has irrevocably changed the nature of the American body politic. Those who received, or thought they received, sanctions from the President of the United States, through the C.I.A., to break every kind of law in pursuance of their secret mandate are still doing so—not in Cuba but here at home and nearby in Latin America.

The Fish is Red is a phrase used by former C.I.A. operative E. Howard Hunt in a radio message intended to deceive Castro on the eve of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Castro smelled a herring and was not tricked. Journalists like Warren Hinckle and William Turner also have finely tuned noses for what is "off" in the barrels of government propaganda. For this the book is useful, and as they remind the readers, quoting Cuban terrorist Armando Lopez Estrada, "The war is not over." □

Dwelling Places

BETSY BLACKMAR

BUILDING THE DREAM: A Social History of Housing in America. *By Gwendolyn Wright. Pantheon Books. 329 pp. $18.50.*

In the cover photograph of Gwendolyn Wright's *Building the Dream*, a neatly attired family of five stand smiling in front of their Levittown home. Although the color of the *Life* magazine photograph is slightly cloudy, the image is immediately recognizable. This was America's housing dream circa 1949.

As Wright's book shows, Americans have cultivated a good many such visions of the well-ordered dwelling for a well-ordered society. Examining the controversies that surrounded the development of thirteen different housing "prototypes" from the time of the Puritans to the present, Wright constructs a cultural interpretation of the history of domestic architecture. The scope of her survey is impressive.

For the Puritans, housing—the original Cape Cod cottage—embodied an ideology of self-control and mutual surveillance. In the nineteenth century, builders celebrated the family morality ensconced in the expansive Victorian house, while Progressive-era domestic scientists promoted the idea of the efficiently managed bungalow. Architects who designed some of the first apartments experimented with communal space, while housing reformers campaigned for more private space in model tenements.

Wright investigates the design of communities as well as of dwellings. She argues that the Federal row houses built in so many cities in the first part of the nineteenth century reflected a republican faith in equal opportunity, and that the arrangement of company towns in the 1920s deliberately restricted workers' autonomy. She moves from slave quarters and mill town boardinghouses to public housing and suburban tract developments. As she examines each dwelling type, Wright touches on the history of building materials and utilities, of room layout and ornamentation, of private financing and Federal housing policy, of family life and social relations. Lively illustrations enrich the narrative. If *Building the Dream*'s fourteen chapters read a bit like a lecture series, it is a series well worth attending.

Wright belongs to a new generation of architectural historians eager to analyze the social context and implications of building design. Her book makes us aware of the way architecture encourages and protects particular attitudes toward the family and social relations. But Wright's survey also demonstrates the problems inherent in any cultural interpretation of a socially divided landscape, a landscape that is organized through the market. Though she explicates the cultural motives of those who advocated new housing designs, she can do no more than guess at the values of those who had no control over the architecture they lived in—slaves, "factory girls," public housing tenants and middle-class families. Thus we learn a great deal about the producers' intentions and techniques, but less about how consumers acquired and rearranged living space to serve *their* practical circumstances and needs. We also are left wondering about the subsequent history of these prototypes, the ways in which use and experience came to contradict design.

These questions become all the more important as we try to understand the relationship between housing and politics. For decades we have been told that home ownership and the detached single-family dwelling are conservative forces in our culture. But what happens as more and more people are excluded from this particular aspect of the American dream and begin to create alternative housing arrangements and communities? What happens when people who thought they were secure within that dream find themselves struggling to maintain it? Wright is very much concerned with these issues, and her concluding chapter, "Preserving Homes and Promoting Change," is a thoughtful essay on the emerging housing crisis of the 1980s. She argues that domestic architecture, like the values it reflects, must respond to the changing role of women, new household arrangements, the growing number of older citizens, the rising cost of energy and the demise of Federal housing programs: "The recent surge of organizations rallying around housing issues will not necessarily be able to solve housing problems," Wright says, "but they can do something about the way in which those problems are addressed. . . . [They] can encourage more men and women to become involved in defining the kinds of cities and communities they want." *Building the Dream* provides a critical overview of how Americans defined and designed their communities in the past and challenges us to rethink the possibilities for the future. □

Betsy Blackmar, who writes on nineteenth-century New York City housing, teaches American studies at Yale University.

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Going Over Ike

BRUCE KUKLICK

THE DECLASSIFIED EISENHOWER. *By Blanche Wiesen Cook. Doubleday and Company. 432 pp. $17.95.*

This is a frustrating and occasionally irritating book. In the first decade after the Eisenhower Presidency, liberal intellectuals dominated most discussion of its achievements, and Dwight David Eisenhower was generally portrayed as an incompetent and ideologically rigid cold warrior. Since Watergate, however, specialists in contemporary political history have begun to sketch a more nuanced account of the 1950s. *The Declassified Eisenhower* is the first full-length study to offer an analysis of modern Republicanism based on substantial archival work.

Blanche Wiesen Cook's research in primary sources is her main strength. In this respect, at least, her book is far superior to Robert Divine's *Eisenhower and the Cold War*, another recent interpretation that proceeds without an investigation of original material but comes to similar conclusions. Yet Cook's work has vices Divine's is free of: *The Declassified Eisenhower* is unevenly written and unclearly focused, and its understanding is unbalanced.

The lack of focus stems from Cook's failure to shape the book properly. Her intention was to center her study on the foreign economic policy of the Eisenhower era. Yet the first 150 pages deal with Eisenhower before he was President, a comparatively minor counter in international politics. The last 200 pages of text discuss the Presidency, but of these almost half are concerned with the coup in Guatemala in 1954. The result is a truncated view of Eisenhower.

When Cook does attend to Eisenhower's policies, she reflects the libertarian left's sympathies with some aspects of Republicanism: a fear of the growth of the state, a concern for individualism and a desire for moderation in foreign policy. And she accurately and astutely describes Eisenhower's inheritance as "a divided legacy of peace and political warfare." Ike was a peaceful compromiser wary of big government and a big military, mindful of the need for restraint. At the same time, he was eager to protect and expand American capitalism. The result was a vigorous anti-Communism that nonetheless eschewed adventurism.

All this is shrewd and to the point, but Cook too often neglects the simple obligation to comprehend Eisenhower and instead delivers herself of her views on the problems of "the American century." Here she slips into strident and self-righteous moralizing. A paragraph on the Allied intervention in Russia in 1919 is a model of misconception. Her understanding of the politics of World War II and the immediate postwar period is belligerently simple. And she blames Eisenhower for "the lost political opportunity" of the last thirty-five years for not dumping Richard Nixon before the Checkers speech.

The Declassified Eisenhower is not a negligible piece of research. But it reflects the lack of a tradition of critical scholarship in the area and does little to advance substantially our understanding of recent history. □

Bruce Kuklick is the editor of American Quarterly *and the author of* The United States and the Division of Germany *(Cornell).*

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Nicholas Nickleby

At the end of the first segment of *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, my 11-year-old daughter turned to me and said, "It's wonderful, daddy, but I'm getting so tired." Ah, Priscilla, the spirit was willing, etc. After promising to tell her what happened, I put her in a cab, grabbed a frankfurter at a stand and went back for the evening session, which lasted four and a half hours on top of the afternoon's four. Out on the sidewalk during one of the brief intermissions, I noticed that at least half of my fellow theatergoers were yawning, or trying to stifle yawns—not from boredom, it was clear, but from near exhaustion. The mind-body conflict has seldom been played out so publicly, so dramatically, one might say.

Is it worth it—worth the aching spine and the $100 ticket price? Well, I have heard of people in London (where the price was, of course, much lower) seeing the show four or five times, and have been told by viewers here that they intend to see it at least once more. I suppose it is worth it, since the body recovers; time has no eschatological dimension and should therefore be filled as agreeably as possible, and money right now is like smoke. The Royal Shakespeare Company's rendering of Charles Dickens isn't the "theatrical event" of the century or even of the decade. It isn't going to change your consciousness or heighten your perceptions, but it's a very good "read," as the British say, as well as a lesson in ensemble playing such as we could never have been given by native instructors.

I use the word "read" advisedly, since *Nicholas Nickleby* is much more a novel being told and displayed than an original drama, which isn't to derogate it by any means. It's a story put on stage, an idea that has its origins in Paul Sills's *Story Theater* of a few years ago and in the R.S.C.'s *Marat-Sade*, among other sources. Having chosen *Nickleby* there was another choice to be made. If you're going to do any long fictional work like this on stage, you either have to abstract from it and create a far smaller dramatic equivalent, a histrionic miniature, so to speak—as in *The Coach with Six Insides*, the theatrical "rendering" of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* some years ago, or even in Harold Pinter's screenplay for Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*—or you set it out with as much fidelity to the original and in as great detail as you can. In choosing the latter course, the company has succeeded remarkably well, offering us something very close in weight, color, flamboyance and spectacle to Dickens's own huge tale.

There have been complaints that for all its enormous length and sweep, the show omits a number of characters and events and scants others. This seems to me carping; to have done *everything* would have placed intolerable burdens on both actors and spectators. As it was, I was amazed by my own stamina and much more by that of the performers, especially Roger Rees, who plays Nicholas and is on stage a large proportion of the time. No, the thing is certainly long and full enough, and faithful enough to Dickens, too. Whatever subtleties it might miss in him don't seem to me crucial; Dickens, after all, wasn't among the subtlest of

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writers, but he was surely among the most energetic. And it's this energy that has found its way into a theatrical creation exceptionally vivid, cheerful, skillful and self-possessed.

The account has been given (most recently by Benedict Nightingale in the Arts and Leisure section of *The New York Times*, October 4) of how the Royal Shakespeare's director, Trevor Nunn, conceived the idea of doing *Nickleby* a few years ago, engaged an associate director, John Caird, and a writer, David Edgar, then threw the project to the company, who worked on it with enthusiasm for many months until it evolved into the shape it now has. Among the things I liked best about the production was the way the actors, when not on stage themselves, stood or sat in various parts of the playing area—the set is composed of several tiers with grillwork railings—watching their colleagues at work. The effect is one of intense, affectionate collaboration.

The collaborative effort shows itself in a number of other ways. All but two of the thirty-nine performers double and even triple up (only Rees and David Threlfall as Smike, the afflicted youth Nicholas befriends, play a single role), and the narration, which ties the picaresque events together, is spread throughout the cast. Each actor is responsible for bringing on and taking off some of the props employed in his scenes, and each participates in chorus-like activities. Most imaginative of all, members of the cast lend their bodies to the creation of various objects (a coach, a wall, etc.), an exercise in invention that occurs more frequently as the work comes to its climax. The mixture of realism and suggestion—the costumes seem gloriously authentic; the boys at Wackford Squeers's school are played by men, and we accept the impersonation—is extremely bold and artful.

With scarcely an exception (Suzanne Bertish's Peg is greatly overblown), the actors are so deft and what I can only call *enlightening*, both in their individual stints and in their coherence with the whole, that it seems ungracious to single anyone out. Yet I feel the need to mention Rees, a splendid face, all angles and thrust, and a vigorous sensibility; Threlfall, whose stricken Smike is a tour de force; John Woodvine, whose Ralph Nickleby, the wicked uncle, grows in intricacy and painfulness as his doom advances; Alun Armstrong, murderous yet strangely touching as Wackford Squeers; Lila Kaye, as the monstrous Mrs. Squeers and the delicious Mrs. Crummles, and, not least, Edward Petherbridge, a lovely, gentle, fluttery, indomitable Newman Noggs.

If I have any demurrers, they're marginal. One thing I found a little disturbing was a spoof of *Romeo and Juliet* enacted by the Crummles troupe and Nicholas. It's funny all right, but it's entirely an invention of Edgar's. My objection isn't that it's not in Dickens but that it's not in the spirit of Dickens; it's more akin to the famous Shakespeare parody in *Beyond the Fringe*. Rather more seriously, I was upset by something for which I don't suppose I should blame the company but rather the audience, something I suspect happens at every performance.

The broad, melodramatic side of Dickens is a thing we all accept, and the production is geared in large part to it. At times we're thrown back to an earlier era of theater: the audience cheers when Nicholas turns on the tyrannical Squeers and beats him, and boos at various other evildoers. This is perfectly within the occasion's atmosphere, but something else occurs that isn't, or ought not to be. I said before that Dickens wasn't the most subtle writer, yet he had his indirections. More than once the audience not only missed certain oblique resonances but responded in a wholly wrong way. One example: When Nicholas asks Smike why he wants to carry Nicholas's bundle for him, Smike stammeringly replies, "Because I *thought of* carrying it for you." A burst of laughter greeted this wonderfully subtle, deeply poignant remark, a revelation of how love informs the mind and the other way round.

But if this sort of poetry escapes the typical Broadway audience, the enthusiasm it showed for the large outlines of the piece was, as I say, well placed. And the company does everything it can to foster good feeling. Before the two segments and during the intermissions, cast members mingle with the spectators, signing programs and, on one occasion, handing out scones. An amiable conspiracy is at work, nicely illustrated by a moment in the play. When a potential viewer of the Crummles troupe's work protests "Four shillings for one play!" the reply is, "Well, there are a lot of people in it . . . and it's very long." The nudge in the audience's ribs produced a swirl of hilarity. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

My Evening With Andre
The Woman Next Door
Beau Pere
Taxi zum Klo

Louis Malle, whom I discussed in these pages most recently in a review of *Atlantic City* and, before that, in a review of *Pretty Baby*, is now showing as unlikely a picture as was ever given a commercial run. It is *My Evening With Andre*, a two-hour conversation between two friends who have not seen each other for some time and who have agreed to meet at a quiet and, I would guess, ferociously expensive restaurant in New York City. The format does not greatly strain the resources of screen narration, but Malle keeps the scene alive with gentle background business as appetizing as the food and the drink, and the picture develops a memorable charm.

Wallace Shawn is a playwright, Andre Gregory a director. They play themselves, but at what fictional distance it is impossible for a stranger to say. Shawn, whom we see first, approaches the evening with some misgiving; he is beset with practical problems, principally that of paying his bills, and has heard disturbing reports of Gregory, who has not worked at his trade for several seasons and has been much out of the country. It will be best, thinks Shawn, if he plays the role of questioner.

That tactic succeeds, I would guess, beyond his expectations. After they order their meals—that is, after Gregory orders and his companion says, me too—Shawn opens with, "Well, tell me what you've been doing," and hits the jackpot. Gregory responds with an account of his quest for spiritual fulfillment, which has taken him from Scotland to India to the Sahara to Poland and yet on again, engaging him in a variety of identity-enriching experiences that included being buried alive. That inhumation is the climax of the tale, the mere memory of it bringing the narrator to the edge of a nervous seizure. To this spate of self-concern Shawn replies with "wow" or "God" or sometimes with no more than a cocked eyebrow or a twitched lip. Very rarely does he get a word in edgewise.

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They are entertainingly unlike, these two. Gregory has a long, lean face and hot eyes; his voice is sonorous and his speech eloquent; he commands the full vocabulary of contemporary *angst*. Shawn is round of countenance, his eyes almost hidden by the surrounding flesh. His voice tends to squeak, and he employs a nervous giggle that, whether deliberately or not, seems an apology for his quick intelligence. He is a man easy to like but, I suspect, one difficult to know.

I began by being attracted to Gregory, whose naïvely enthusiastic chronicle is laced with passion and humor. After a bit I turned against him, resisting the torrent of egocentricity. At the end, though, I was on his side again, having come to see that if his self-indulgence is monstrous, the concern reaches beyond himself. Gregory, to hear him tell it, is made wretched by the inauthenticity of our times. People lack volition; they act galvanically, their senses numb but twitching in response to malign stimuli. One must therefore take extreme, even bizarre, means to recapture and hold on to reality.

Shawn is finally moved to protest. It is unnecessary, and disastrously expensive, to travel to Mount Everest in the search for reality. The corner cigar store contains enough reality, if you only open yourself to it, to "blow your mind." Oh, says Gregory, but that is just the problem; people can't see it in the neighborhood. He speaks for himself, as does Shawn. Well fed, smiling at each other, they finish their coffee.

As Malle's films often do, *My Evening With Andre* leaves you in the lurch. Gregory has scampered around the world to discover some magic remedy for the staleness in his soul. Shawn finds it stocked in the corner store. Or is it that Shawn is protected by the urgency to make ends meet, whereas Gregory, obviously less pressed (he pays the check), has the leisure for terror? In any case, they are men whose conversation is worth the eavesdropping.

For the rest, I have seen in quick succession three movies that, one way or another, dwell on the capacity of the unbridled sexual drive to dislocate, indeed endanger, otherwise tolerably rational lives. The experience has left me somewhat dubious of the whole reproductive procedure, feeling that nature would have been kinder if it had let each of us go his or her quiet way, splitting occasionally like amoebas. Two of the films are from France, and that is perhaps surprising, because the French have a deserved reputation for viewing sex with well-mannered enthusiasm and high good humor. But here, first, is François Truffaut with *The Woman Next Door*, a romantically morbid tale of what looks to be erotomania.

As the film opens, all is well with Bernard and Arlette Coudray (Gérard Depardieu and Michèle Baumgartner), who live with their young son in a village some twenty kilometers from Grenoble. Then one day the Bauchards, Philippe and Mathilde (Henri Garcin and Fanny Ardant), move in next door, and soon thereafter Bernard and Mathilde are meeting at a discreet hotel that rents rooms by the hour. The fact —which they choose to keep to themselves—is that these two have been lovers in the past and that proximity has rekindled the flame.

It is a rather cold flame, for another fact is that, except in the matter of mutual lust, these two never could, and still cannot, endure each other. But each now plays candle to the other's moth, and, as the weeks pass, they fly about in ever more reckless spirals, causing talk in the small community and distressing their respective spouses. Philippe, a self-contained but resolute man, takes belated steps to detach his wife from the flamboyant Bernard, but there is a distressing outbreak of emotion at the local tennis club, and the affair ends as badly as possible.

Truffaut is a compassionate man, sensitive to human weakness, and he treats the besotted lovers with a good deal of tenderness. Nevertheless, there is a lack of organic conviction in the tale (written by the director in collaboration with Suzanne Schiffman and Jean Aurel). The passion seems imposed; one begins to mutter "slaves of love" and to call up memories of D.H. Lawrence in full crusading ardor. Madame Jouve, who manages the tennis club, has in her past a somewhat similar accident of the heart, and Truffaut employs her to throw some Gallic cold water on the operatic goings-on. But this relief comes too late to save the film from an air of anachronistic foolishness. Lovers may still die in each other's arms, but Bernard and Mathilde didn't seem a pair to do so unless someone else was pulling the strings.

Bertrand Blier's *Going Places* and *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* were sardonically amoral movies with a good deal of comic bounce. However, his *Beau Pere*, though it looks like a typical French domestic comedy, left me with a fit of the blues. The film starts off with a man, his wife and the wife's daughter, but almost immediately the woman is killed in a car accident and the camera turns to the relationship between Remi, the 29-year-old stepfather, and Marion, his 14-year-old stepdaughter. Remi (Patrick DeWaere), the most hangdog of losers, is a mediocre cocktail-hour pianist whose wife had scorned him. He tries now to put some meaning into his life by being a responsible parent and refuses to relinquish Marion (Ariel Besse) to her real father, the drunken proprietor of a sleazy nightclub. But Marion isn't looking for a father; she wants a lover and has reasons of her own (the walls of the apartment are thin and she used to lie awake nights) for thinking that Remi would suit her fine.

"I have become a woman," she declares, letting her blouse gape open to confirm the assertion, and you wonder who has been lending her badly written pornography. Remi resists as well as he can, which is almost not at all, and the unalloyed joys of their union struck me as implausible. In any case, the situation doesn't last long. Remi meets another woman with a small daughter, releases Marion to her father and moves on. It wouldn't surprise me if eventually he caught the eye of the police.

Fooling around with young girls is an awkward topic for farce, which I believe Blier intends *Beau Pere* to be. Besse's performance is distressing because she seems to be reciting her lines by rote and going through her repertory of enticements under instruction. The film is titillating and synthetically sweet; it leaves a bad aftertaste.

The most impressive of these sexual chronicles is the German *Taxi zum Klo* (Taxi to the John), an autobiographical work directed by Frank Ripploh, who plays himself in the lead. He is talented and I think very courageous; in this film, he strips himself naked, both literally and figuratively. What he reveals is appalling.

Ripploh, a homosexual, is I suspect irritated by the prurient curiosity of heterosexuals as to what "they do." He demonstrates what they do in the most aggressive and brutal detail. These scenes of sexual gratification between

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men who, as the director says of himself, are terrified of the female genitalia, will make the movie notorious, but they are not what make it tragic. The tragedy is in the life this attractive, capable man seems forced to lead.

During the period covered by the film, Ripploh is a grade school teacher, and the classroom scenes make it plain that he is unusually good at the job. He likes children and knows how to make them work, challenging their wits and stretching their imaginations with original and creative projects. But when the bell rings, this talented, dedicated fellow takes off for some public men's room, there to squat in one of the cubicles, correcting homework and peering hopefully from time to time through a peephole into the adjoining stall.

Ripploh has a steady lover, a modest young man who lives with him, cooks for him and yearns for domesticity. But he himself is a habitual cruiser. He doesn't want a man, he wants men—the boy who pumps gas for his car, some loiterer in leather and dark glasses, a racetrack groom picked up at a transvestite ball. He pursues, he captures, he groans and writhes and is off on the chase again. If he were a fool—if he lacked taste or self-knowledge—it would be sad enough, but Ripploh is a thinking man of considerable substance. Toward the end of the film he commits a kind of symbolic suicide by going to school straight from the ball, a spectacle in turban, rouge and screaming pink veils.

Obsessive promiscuity is an affliction not peculiar to homosexuals, but in their society it seems to be epidemic. Of all the men one meets in *Taxi zum Klo*, only Bernd Broaderup, the director's lover, has any capacity for fidelity. It has been argued that homosexuals make love furtively and on the run because they are bedeviled by the general society. However, Ripploh makes no claim of harassment; on the contrary, he boasts that he lives exactly as he pleases. To an outsider it appears a dog's life, and perhaps that also is what he means to say. □

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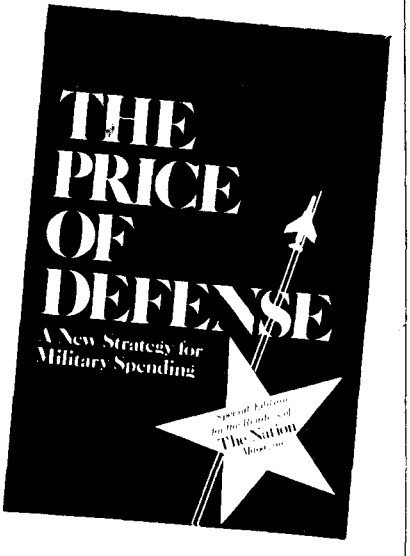

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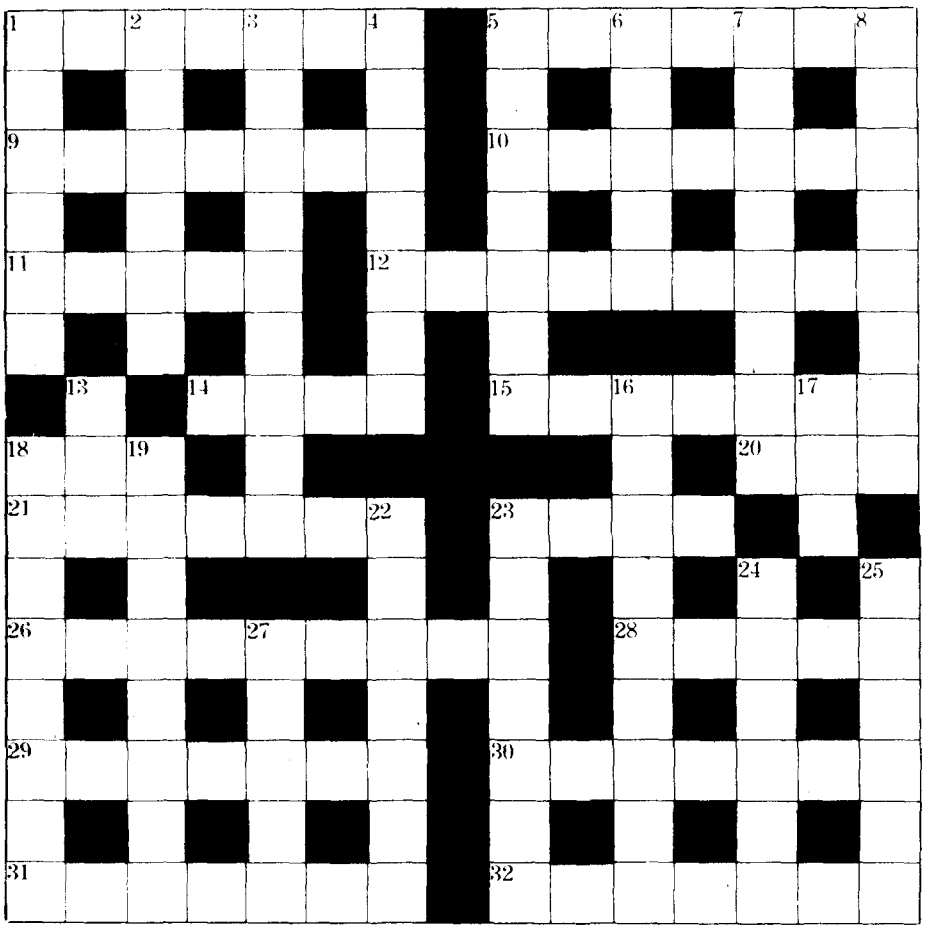

ACROSS

1 Novel version of 5 across. (7)
5 What many fliers do to show the speed of a fighter. (7)
9 What some are told to step on has a tricky start, but such an upset is unpleasant. (7)
10 There's a form of evil in one associated with industry, as some do with conviction. (7)
11 Morning on Gateshead—right in the middle of things! (5)
12 An exciting game, with the sea in stormy condition, played by many. (9)
14 An additional sign might also indicate the positive. (4)
15 Surfeit or state, giving it a twisted inside. (7)
18 See 1 down
20 It's nothing when I like to show it. (3)
21 Acted villainously, in a corny way. (7)
23 Take a little trouble with this wood. (4)
26 Too great for description, but a possibly fine beginning to the old story. (9)
28 They objectively get to the point of the subject. (5)
29 Turns the mind to what one does at school, perhaps. (7)
30 See 1 down
31 De-tailed? Such things are bound to go on! (7)
32 What some try to climb the night before, with a little cat-nap, perhaps. (7)

DOWN

1, 18 across and 30 Old popular music associated with a children's game—also descriptive of Foster's horse, being rather disreputable. (6,3,7)
2 A well-known musketeer was one, with some empty talk to study. (6)
3 Guerilla? Guerrilla? Or is it R instead of I that you need with the latter version of it? (9)
4 Excludes from enumeration, but expects little change. (7)
5 They should be decorative, but the gangsters, as they said, wind up with terrible lies. (7)
6 An article on this old physician might be called "The Commonest Lead Ore." (5)
7 It is to be hoped one isn't always ugly, despite the title—in fact, one is associated with beauty in the garden. (8)
8 Around five feet for the average person—corns grows here for the elephant? (3-5)
13 This ate in a natural way—lodging there, too. (3)
16 What might carry the tea up on board could be easily managed. (9)
17 Special information about what a gentleman can do with his hat. (3)
18 Teach, so remembered? Indicated by hand, if 18 across is made so. (8)
19 One might go to the other side. (8)
22 Certainly doesn't appreciate what a foreign country seems to do on kicking out our military installations. (7)
23 Does Tyranny, at sight of our forbidding things? (7)
24 Troops, as they say, serve as a threat. (6)
25 A kitten, perhaps, is about the length of a small wad of something. (6)
27 Consider one criminal? Use your weapon! (5)

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